"Is it going to last?" The older man asked softly with his eyes turned into light when crashed with the severe depth of oceans splashed together into one enormous wave of blueness.

"You?" The brunet enquired with a crack in his voice, which could be a sign of meaningless quavering or a thunder hidden underneath the crack, waiting for a friendly storm in his
awaken darkness.

"You and I. The continuum of your crime and my time of dying." Hannibal answered quietly.
Love Is Smoke That You Breathe

Chapter Summary

Inspiration: "Scars" by Boy Epic

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

This is the end
My beloved friends
I'm lost in dreams and all I know is where I've been
Run love
I'm the truth that you're afraid of
I'm a fever that you made up
Just a martyr on a bridge that's burning down

Can you see my scars?
Can you feel my heart?
This is all of me for all of the world to see
So, who's it gonna be?
The one that you only need
I gave it all and all you gave was sweet misery
So, who's gonna save us now when the ashes hit the ground?
I gave it all and all you gave was sweet misery

"Stay with me," he heard a calm, even voice breaking through the great reverie of silence and the patch of neverending thoughts, barely showing their true nature. "Will you stay?"

"Where else would I go?"

A rustle. An unnerving noise of rattling shoes. Balanced steps. After a moment, breath – close enough to pay attention to it, to make skin shiver just a little bit. Fidgety glance of shining blue eyes followed. Maroon, murky eyes glanced back. Few inches from the mystery: not explored, yet clearly deep enough to cut air with glittery blade of a knife. Was that particular narrative of the story still open to be experienced? Seen through? Within untamed chains of events, completely out of order?

Will Graham has never truly known what exactly he should have got out of the fleeting, faint moments of glancing at the other. What he should have been careful about. What to fear for and protect from. For the price was high, indeed. Inminent aching. Unbearable pain of lacking. And wanting.
Was that something to be called reciprocated understanding? Or was it merely a blackmail escalated to the level of noble feelings?

"If I showed you an outstretched, expanded through the line of space and time, construction of a place, ideal home, the very true and majestic Mind Palace and its halls full of hushed tones, or rumbled even, pulsing with the energy of a newborn life itself... With undiscovered palettes of colours and shadows, various mixtures of tastes and flavours, inviting you in..."

The sensuality of intimate whispering seemed to force its way through the breath that Will took in.

Impossible transition .

"...Would you get comfortable without pretense, without mocking modesty? Would you just bare your bones there and live peacefully within its intended, designed beauty?"

"Are you going to build a house? Or is it maybe that you have constructed it already?"

"I've built it, although not with my hands. I've constructed it, yet not for me alone, Will."

"It is way too soon for Christmas' gifts."

"As it is too late to seek convenient occasions. Or excuses."

“What do you expect of me?” Will looked straight in the eyes of bittersweet abyss. The man who had changed him once and for all stood right in front of him now. Why was it so hard to see through the veil of elegance and eloquence? Will knew that he had that peculiar capability of getting a glimpse into the darkness, of seeing into it like through an open door. He could not comprehend and fully navigate that power, though. Not yet. What was it that he lacked? It was not perspective, not really.

"I do not expect anything. I am only giving you a very precious gift. Are you willing to waste it? Will you simply toss it away this time again?"

It was certainly not a poetry of broken sounds or of any kind for that matter.

It was cruel, to the core. To be asked to give birth to hope that never lasts or stays long enough to cherish.

It was smoke – as it has always been. The smoke which was floating, drifting beyond the air. Will breathed it in as much as he could. And maybe that was just fine. Maybe that was enough for him to survive.

***

Blood was spilling.

Would it hurt the world to let the night shadows turn from their fate for once?

"Will, are you listening? Do you hear me?"

Will heard.

However, he could not respond properly. He felt like drowning in something oily, heavy, sticky. Not water, clearly not blood – thicker, harder to get through. Tar. He slipped away, soaked in tar.

What had happened to him?
"Will, I need you to answer me. I am not certain if I should continue without your permission."

Permission. One word that did not fit somehow. It stuck out. It made Will more conscious – he actually opened his eyes a little bit, although everything seemed to be blurry. Like all the lines of reality.

"Since when do you need it?" He smiled faintly and tried to figure out where he was. The place didn't remind him of anything familiar.

"Rude, Will," the shadowy figure replied in a low voice. "Shock and loss of blood make you extremely rude."

"Cheers to that. What are you doing?"

"Saving us. You, mainly. There is an extremely high risk of infection right now. We escaped the country, however, thus I will not state that it is the worst scenario possible."

"Oh," was all the younger man said. He didn't feel much about it. He stopped caring. He looked in the direction of some medical tools rumbling.

"Is it going to hurt?" He asked quietly, eyes fluttering.

"Yes."

Then the younger man saw Hannibal from the perfect angle. His face was tired, although not as tired as it should have been. He was focused on whatever he was doing with the tools laid on a small table next to a bed in which Will was lying.

Will didn't want to think. It was too much of a distraction from pain and he wanted to feel it all. It was less about endurance and more about how to embrace the aching in a way that would connect him to the depths of reality, instead of depths of his own mind. He wanted to get outside. He needed sensations.

"Don't rush yourself then." Wavering blue eyes fell upon the other man's mouth hovering above as Hannibal leaned in.

Few seconds later Will felt an insufferable, nagging flick of pain. It continued for what seemed like hours but what was probably mere seconds. Hot and sharp whiteness of vision betrayed him and he found himself drifting away.

"You live with confidence of what you are able to understand and comprehend. Unfortunately, you also live with such profound certainty of what you think you cannot grasp within your reach."

"And what would it be that I find myself so incapable of, doctor L-lector?" Will cringed, yet a little smile tugged at his lips and lightened his features.

"Tenderness," Hannibal answered quickly. "Just because you see yourself as someone who understands only horror and violence, it doesn't necessarily mean that it is what you deserve to receive."

Will huffed softly. It pained to bear the conversation more than to suffer from the open wounds being stitched up. The older man fell silent after that, pursuing the medical procedure with precision. He pulled the raw skin together and inserted a small needle into it.

Will hissed helplessly. With a few more surgical movements he found himself exhaling a swirl of
heat through his teeth. He looked up at the other man when the feeling of pain faltered. Hannibal's gaze was already on him. The muscles on his face didn't reveal anything but the barely noticeable flicker of light in his dark eyes gave everything away. Will knew that expression all too well. He looked away.

Overwhelmed.

"You deserve tenderness, Will. I need you to remember that," Hannibal whispered faintly, which should come across as completely unnatural and out of character but somehow... The fondness embodied in the other man's voice felt wonderfully right.

Will didn't show on the outside how much that particular tone pleased his burning desires, buried in the forgotten abyss of his heart.

***

The evening was very cold when Hannibal went outside. The chill didn't bother him though. He liked how it made his face dry and stinging. Standing in his long, woolen coat, he looked over the horizon. The hideout that Chiyou had chosen for him to stay was not to Hannibal's liking at all. However, he needed to learn how to accept the situation until he could change the surroundings to his will.

Now was not the best time. Will's condition was not good enough for both of them to move freely so Hannibal had to wait.

Patience was a virtue and he was surely well-known for it.

After having walked through the nearby area, almost uninhabited, he returned to a small tenement house. He encountered Will who was trying to walk across a living room, very unsuccessfully.

A resigned sigh escaped Hannibal's mouth when he saw the younger man propping himself up with a chair so he wouldn't fall to the floor.

"Will."

With a snap, Hannibal ran up to him and hastily wrapped his arms around the shivering frame blocking his way with firm gentleness.

"Tu kvailas, neatsargus berniukas!" The older man growled dangerously low in the foreign language. "What are you trying to prove?"

"Don't touch me!" Will's voice pitched into a wounded howl. "I-I... C-can go by m-myself."

"You clearly can't," Hannibal replied irritated; his accent thickened and he clenched his teeth. "I didn't spend the whole night taking care of you and stitching you up just for you to waste all my efforts, thus, please, stop resisting me."

But Will didn't listen at all. "I n-need to go to the bathroom, Hannibal. L-let me go," Will hissed painfully while weakly pressing his hand to his wounded and broken arm. "It hurts, s-stop."

Hannibal softened the grip and spoke tenderly: "You're severely injured, fuzzy and dosed with medicine I've given you. Please, allow me to help and stop acting like a wounded animal."

"I am the wounded animal," the brunet murmured angrily but stopped moving and put one hand on Hannibal's shoulder to lean on.
He hated the feeling of being defenseless, especially when presented in front of the most intimidating and also the most important man in his life. He wished to be strong and powerful for the other to see how high he could fly across the dark, nightly sky. He would never say such a careless thought out loud but he knew in his heart that it was the most unnerving thing about his current situation.

"Why didn't you leave me, I wonder..." He started, blinking rapidly the moment he said it; he wasn't going to mention that but it came out anyway. Maybe the drugs given to him were at fault, he couldn't tell. The only thing he knew was the heavy, hissing sound he heard near his ear.

Then the whole world spun around. The feeling of dread and dizziness hit him hard when strong hands picked him up in one quick motion and carried him to the bathroom. He tried to pull away but couldn't, being caged within Hannibal's arms. He was about to say something since he opened his mouth but the only sound that came out was just a meager mumble.

"Shhhh, stop talking." He heard an annoyed voice; he didn't have it in him to protest further.

All of the sudden, Will felt as if a long heat wave went through his whole body. The hotness was aggravating, he couldn't shake it off. He could barely sit straight when he found himself being put on a corner of a bathtub.

"Will, do you hear me?"

Will could hardly nod his head.

"I'm not sure if I should leave you like this but you will hold it against me, if I don't. I will be on the other side of the door. Call my name if you need anything." Hannibal left the small space of the bathroom and closed the door behind him.

Will was alone again. He exhaled the air trapped in his lungs. He was a little nauseous but ignored the feeling and tried to stand up.

The situation seemed very ironic and all in all funny. Just few nights ago he was playing that great hero who slayed the Red Dragon himself alongside his comrade, companion and enemy in one and now he was the helpless little creature who couldn't move freely and needed help with every step on his way. The prose of life. Boring, basic, disgusting routine.

"H-hanni-" Will muttered faintly after he'd finished using the toilet. He seated on the corner of the tub again, trying to catch his breath. All of it was way too exhausting.

He felt cold hands on his forehead so he closed his eyes, leaning into the touch. "How massive of a dose did you give me, really?"

Hannibal smirked. "There were several medicines. You weren't supposed to wake up so soon and wander around the house."

"S-sorry," the younger man replied shakily. Hannibal pressed the palm of his hand to his cheeks and forehead, then frowned.

"You have a high fever from what I can tell, it might be infection or inflammation. We need to get it down fast and then you need to rest."

"I-I'm not sure what you're saying..."

"Just wait. Don't move." Hannibal instructed and turned on the water in the bathtub. Then he got closer to Will again, unbuttoning his pyjamas shirt which he gave him last night.
Will wanted to protest somehow but was too dazed to do so, therefore he simply opened his eyes lazily and looked at Hannibal's face, then his hands, watching as he was undressing him. When the older man took off his pants and underwear as well in one quick swoop, he was already blacking out. His mind didn’t want to cooperate anymore.

"Will."

***

"Will?" There was light and sound that didn't let him sleep comfortably any longer.

"Will." The sound repeated. The brunet could sense the moment of waking up to the cold reality.

"Nhh." Will opened his eyes slowly.

At first, he was sure that he saw the ravenstag in front of him; esoteric, volatile and ethereal creature made of black substance and smoke. But it wasn't any mythical animal, just a man. Or was it?

"Hello, Will." Hannibal tilted his head a bit. "You were gone for almost 24 hours. That's the spirit, mylimasis."

"Myli-what?" The younger man asked sleepy, Hannibal only laughed briefly.

"You need to eat something."

"How is it possible that I'm just a living corpse and you're all okay?" Will inquired with regret, then also laughed.

"I am not okay." Hannibal's expression turned dark.

"You will be," Will answered. "We both will. Just give me some time. I'm not even sure where I am."

The other man didn't say anything. He just sat next to Will, brushing his hair gently out of his face from time to time until the brunet was fully awaken.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, everyone! :3 It is my very first fanfiction (ever!). And it is my first work/story in English, so please, take it easy on me. Or don't. And give me a feedback - I appreciate constructive criticism, especially if it helps me get better.

Ps: Imported from Wattpad
The night was surrounded by ungodly silence and thick air forthcoming with the mist. It was going to be a brand new beginning for some, a brand new experience of life and death alike.

A blonde-haired man took two steps forward, then he stopped and stood steadily, no movements to distract a prey confronting him now. It was only reasonable to attack and make it quick; no drama, no performance, no theatre of powerful poetry that dying could possess sometimes. A sharp edge of a blade and nothing more to cross a line. He hesitated though.

"Will, do not make me take actions that I don't wish to become our bittersweet reality."

"Nobody can make us do anything. Your words, Hannibal."

"My words then."

He forced his way. He moved forward with a purpose to kill. But he could not do it like he had always planned it. The frequency from an unknown source stopped him halfway through.

Will sharpened his own blade. He even made an effort to do it with his hands. Like he has always imagined it. He moved his fingers and violently twisted them in Hannibal's hair.

The epiphany of touch.

Hannibal gasped loudly.

"What are you doing?" He asked.

"Killing you, isn't it obvious?"

Hannibal's eyes smiled.

Will was powerful. His way of channeling emotions incorporated the very perspective of now, resonating with forever.

"Is it going to last?" The older man asked softly with his eyes turned into light when crashed with the
severe depth of oceans splashed together into one enormous wave of blueness.

"You?" The brunet enquired with a crack in his voice, which could be a sign of meaningless quavering or a thunder hidden underneath the crack, waiting for a friendly storm in his new-built darkness.

"You and I. The continuum of your crime and my time of dying," Hannibal answered quietly.

"Dying is a thing of time, attention and life itself. It is a constant thing of the present, never ending and never staying."

It changes everything in the dynamics of one's universe. If you die constantly and permanently, you live enough to see the purpose of all of those questions asked and all of those answers you had never got.

Will didn’t use his voice again, he used his tongue instead; with full awareness he wielded the carneous wet muscle. Not to put all the questions into question, but to let them rest in the state of oblivion.

He stopped thinking and converting useless abstracts of completely worn out mind. He smiled unabashedly when he heard a relentless whine coming from the other; the quivering of skin was just one step too much.

Will gave in to the purifying etiquette of behaviourism.

He bit the predator and master of his becoming. The special sweetness of that metallic taste was beguiling. Steely.

Iron.

He bit again.

Then he had enough excuses to lick Hannibal clean - from blood, sentiment and all the emotions in between: underlying, standing somewhere behind the great curtain of a game.

The game.

"Will, stop-"

"When was the last time you stopped?"

"Will..."

Will loved himself in the mouth of the other.

His name.

Overused. Sprawling. Becoming something new each time it was called out, resembling something else with every urgent need to express it.

The wanting that had to stand behind the call.

Unquenchable.

He smiled again and put his tongue to rest and his lips against Hannibal's, dry and demanding.
Will was sore and out of his body at the same time when he finally woke up. Of course the feeling of not belonging to his skin was one-or-less seconds long experience of denial or a symptom of some defence mechanism.

Bizarreness waited on him until he was in full potential to appreciate its form, then hit him hard and let go as fast as it came. The moments of bliss never last too long.

Those few flicking moments of light travelling vastly and ending somewhere on the edge of Will's pupils. Through retina, cornea, towards the murky space of his brain.  

*Light always finds its shadow*, he thought poetically. *The strange feeling of ego-dissociation is lost between one thought given to yourself and one to the other standing before you*, he added inwardly and lazily enough to not think it over.

"Hello, Will."

The brunet searched for the voice.

There he was, the hunter, the monster, the actor, the man... All of 'the' meant the world and more.

**Smoke.**

It burnt to inhale while existing in the same sphere as Hannibal Lecter.

He didn't say a word. He didn't have to. The previous nights were filled with too much pain and breathing too sharply.

"You look better. However, it is obligatory for you to stay in bed for at least a few more days. The stitches will not hold on if you wish to do otherwise, like the last time." The blonde-haired man spoke with an authority strongly glued to the presence of that particular version of him, the doctor roleplay.

**The tableau.**

It was not much valued by Will. It served to put distance and to ascribe differently arranged roles and positions.

"I will be lying down. I won't move. I don't think I have it in me to make any movements possible now," he answered with sore bitterness.

Hannibal sat down beside him on his bed. He gently pressed fingers to touch bedsheets. It was such a delicate move. Also misplaced. The sheet felt cold and nubby.

"I mean the best. I always have. It is all I've ever wanted for you," Hannibal said, not moving.

"Empty words. You left me. Twice. You do remember that, don't you? I remember clearly. Those days," the brown-haired man replied with regret and instantly he wished that he hadn't. He didn't want to encourage "the good doctor" to try and be empathetic or, even worse, to become more manipulative and provocative than he already was.

"I didn't leave you. I waited for you all those years. So you would come and understand the truth about yourself. You feel it. You know that you do not belong anywhere but here-"
"With you?"

Their eyes met. He couldn't avert his gaze. Too consuming.

"With me," Hannibal replied gently, almost shy.

***

To make someone a believer, one needs to make them vulnerable enough to see a vision of life that they have never thought could be a reality. Make their life fearless.

Entice them.

"Do we have to leave now?" Will asked, dressing up. It still hurt to move too quickly but he didn't want to be a sick person who is taken care of. He didn't need Hannibal's care, he thought. Annoyed, he buttoned up his shirt. Then he zipped his black jeans.

"Yes. New location is waiting for us in Norway," the blonde answered, busy with packing. "Are you ready?"

"As much as I can be."

Hannibal smiled.

The outside of their temporary tenement house showed how much it didn't fit the older man's expectations. Nothing fancy, just an old building without meaning, without any antique, historic value. Nothing inspirational. Nothing to stay for. Nothing to look at for Jack, the FBI and all the others looking thoroughly.

They left unseen, silent. They didn't talk through all the time to the airport. Then they separated from each other.

Became strangers.

Will didn't like the questions from the stewardess who came to his seat several times. He did not like the coffee and no, the wine did not help his travel sickness.

It was not the motion sickness, he knew that much. They were sick expectations. "No return" symptom.

They had several flight transfers while their long travel to cold Scandinavia. Will didn't come to like big spaces in Oslo but he couldn't make much of it since he spent less than an hour there. Then he was once again in some uncomfortable seat trying not to surrender to shadowy questions hanging in the air.

He felt really dizzy when he was getting off the plane for the last time.

**The final destination.**

"You are not alone, Will. I am here with you." He heard the voice behind him.

"I know that," he finally spoke calmly after he had given it some thought and silence.

Hannibal remained quiet as Will moved and made his way to him. He looked the blonde man in the eyes.
"What do we do now?"

"Try to provide protection from, assumedly, the whole world. I'm going to take us somewhere safe," he replied carefully.

"It's odd to hear that from you," he started, then faltered and corrected himself. "That you need protection from the world, that is."

Will laughed bitterly. He felt nervous from the start but now it was more evident than before. Maybe it should make Hannibal worried, but it only made him more curious instead.

"Come, we need to get out of the public area as quickly as we can," said Hannibal.

The airport was rather small. If not being wanted by the governmental forces of the United States and out of time, Will would appreciate that special ambiance there. It was low-key, almost cosy.

Will liked small, intimate places where he could hide himself from others or more like separate walking and making so much noise strangers from his vivid visions.

Untill now, he didn't want to admit the ultimate truth - he liked what he had been seeing in his mind all along. He liked all of his sorted out, unscrambled, designed images of people and their fate written all over his imagination.

They were better that way.

Without realness to it, without the corrupted touch of just-being. They existed within him more lively and sharply than they did in that greyish sticky mush called routine of life.

Whole new worlds and galaxies made of blood, soil water, emotions, purpose and destiny, all of it transformed completely. They were his universes to create, observe, watch them grow, take care of and annihilate in the final settlement. Maybe people were better as an internalised construct. Meaty, boring, demanding humans could not hold onto him.

He could not hold onto them.

Will went straight to the exit of the airport, following Hannibal.

After you, his mind viciously commented mobilizing neurons to wake up from a deep sleep just to be painfully born again within the flow of past tenses becoming overwhelming reality of nowness. I am always after you, Will thought.

When they both walked out of the Leknes Airport, they took a taxi. There were no buses or any public transport near the place. That surely was good.

When they finally reached their destination, Will didn't know what to think of it. They got off the taxi first and then they had to walk through several, almost abandoned areas and some small forest for more than an hour before they arrived... Well, as it turned out later, home.

The place was rather small but not tiny. It was comfortable, neat and gave off that feeling of being taken care of. Nothing fancy or refined though. Such an environment seemed unnatural for Hannibal.

"That's strange," Will said while he was unpacking his clothes and putting them in a wooden wardrobe.

Hannibal looked at Will slightly puzzled. "This little woody forest house and you in it. With me.
What a combination," the brunet explained slowly. In a minute, he was lost in thought.

"Does it feel wrong to you?" The words echoed in Will's head, spinning around like a wheel or a carousel. He knew the answer all to well.

"It should," he said evasively and fell silent after that. When the wardrobe was full of his new, untouched clothes, he sighed and looked blankly in a mirror. The mirror responded with the same tone.

Hannibal and Will didn't talk much on the first day of their arrival. They didn't talk at all on the second day.

The third day though. The third day was all about talking.

***

Hannibal was standing on a porch holding a simple black cup with hot coffee in it. The very aroma of that blissful liquid could make a walking nightmare energetic. The man took a small sip of it appreciating its rich flavour. Above him only the sound of some birds chirping and around him the greenery of a vast space. Unchanged by men.

The smell of a forest matched his favourite perfumes that he wore every day. Mildly oaky scent that somehow kept reminding him of freedom. He thought of the expression of fierceness or wilderness and at the same time of the superb impression of serenity that one can only find in contact with Nature.

**Peacefulness.**

He slowly breathed in and out, trying to become nothing more than a wave of energy: a flow of very low frequency and of immense blast radius.

He smiled and closed his eyes to open the horizon of all the ambiguous events which have happened.

Breath exhaled, blood rushed, emotions raw, feelings rubbed, intentions lost, thoughts scattered... A machinery of transformed life set in motion and ready to play the music on the highest notes.

"Where are you?" Hannibal heard a whispering voice.

"With you," he answered quickly and took another sip of coffee. He looked lazily at Will who stood few steps away from him, leaned back against a column. His face was stone-cold, like an ancient sculpture and nothing more. Eyes made of a blue steel looked somewhere above the tree branches.

Distant and unreal.

His thick, brown hair was an unbounded mess. The only dynamics in the sore picture seen through Hannibal's eyes.

"Not present me. You're drilling into the past," Will said fiercely. "Do you like what you see?"

Hannibal regarded him thoughtfully. "I like you," he answered plainly.

Will laughed jerkily. "Difficult not to notice since you have such exquisite ways of showing it."

"Are you rejecting my affection, Will?" Hannibal asked mildly amused now.

Will didn't answer to the remark as he was trying to accept what he really felt at the moment without
needless irony or pointless hypocrisy. He thought of every way in which he could make amends with himself to be authentic for once.

Without a warning, he closed the space between them in one purposeful step. He pushed Hannibal against a wooden wall which almost ended in spilling the coffee. He entwined his arms around the other man's back and pressed himself against him.

"I've never done it," he muttered roughly through the clenched teeth while gazing directly in his friend's eyes.

"I recall it differently. You have a strong habit of attacking me with such intimate passion that with time it even became charming in its recklessness," Hannibal stated and smiled completely unfazed.

"I'm talking about rejecting your companionship, you jerk! I have never rejected your feelings for me and if you weren't so toxically obsessed with keeping up the drama, you'd have known by now that I only protested to being torn to pieces by your arrogance and manipulated into the choice that I should be free to make for myself!" Will shouted out on the spur of the moment. It was extremely difficult for Will to think rationally around the man and it was probably because of the reasons he was too scared to name out loud.

Then came the afterthought. The realization. A cold shiver ran down his spine. He shouldn't have said that. Too much unfiltered information. Too many buried emotions that made him cringe inwardly.

He didn't wait for a reaction so that Hannibal wouldn't have time to make him regret what he has just said even more. He let the other man go instantaneously in a rush of breath and went toward the front door of their house.

**Shared space of existence.**

He hardly entered the hall when he felt a strong hand on his shoulder, grabbing him and pulling sharply.

He didn't want a conversation of fists, kicks and roars. His muscles were still too weak for that kind of discussion. His bones would be crashed in the middle of the first sentence.

"Let me go, Hannibal," Will said with a trembling voice.

His weak command was answered with a firm pressure on his arms and the next thing he knew he was already pressed closely against Hannibal's torso with hands tightened around his neck.

At first, he tried to free himself from the embrace. He frantically struggled to wrest control with a small groan escaping him, but eventually the inescapable steadiness of touch pulled Will into the black waters of contradiction where he felt immediate danger of it and found calming safety in it.

As if his nervous system went crazy enough to explode and ceased to exist.

He gave up the moment he felt the dull pain of being strangled by forcefully constricting arms. Then he could swear that he almost felt something else, sharper - like claws piercing through his throat deep enough to make a bloody signature under his skin.

"Hann-" He managed pitifully while trying to exhale the air trapped in his body. The smoky scent was all over him again. He could sense it without breathing.

Then he heard everything loud and clear when Hannibal pressed his cheek against his forehead.
"Do you fear the pain of living by my side so much that the very first sign of death approaching you actually frees your spirit from agony?" It ached to focus on those bitterly spoken words while he was choking beneath tightening pressure.

Will's eyes stung. He gasped automatically when the squeeze weakened, but when he inhaled oxygen, it felt heavy like freezing water viciously destroying his lungs.

"It h-hurts," he whispered brokenly; not sure if that was the final answer to the older man's question or just a simple complaint.

He started coughing. His eyes were already filled with tears and bleary when he was suddenly turned over to face the attacker.

He gazed upon Hannibal in silence, ready to read disappointment or disinterest from his sharply carved face. He didn't expect to see torment reflected in his maroon eyes or any damage resonating with a sad smile that he had on his lips.

"I am afraid that I am not able to find a way to stop inflicting salt to your wounds, Will, if merely my life in its true form makes you hurt all over..." The corner of Hannibal's mouth ticked down bitterly. "I am sorry for the inconvenience."

The hurt tone cracked something within Will's resistance.

Shivering underneath a stinging sensation of wanting to threaten the man with lethal vengeance, Will swallowed and gently put his hand on Hannibal's cheek. His mind couldn't believe the softness of his skin nor the warmth, but it felt exquisitely real nevertheless.

**Overpowering.**

He pressed his fingers slightly against the skin. Hannibal stilled. Air stuck in the older man's lungs.

"Not capable of receiving tenderness... Tell me, is it me only?" He whispered feebly, without mocking, then he took the hand away to replace its touch with the silent kiss on Hannibal's lips.

Whole galaxies of bright stars fell down on the bottom of earth in their full grace when Hannibal locked eyes with Will in that moment.

*Can't live with him, can't live without him.*
I saw bright, open common sense
I do evil things and evil things return
And I'm praying now
Praying for me

You can't hide
I remove from you
Every tiny strength in everything you do
And I'll kick you down
I'll break you with a tender touch
Then the tears cried in the tear garden will be for life

Their very first kiss had not lasted long enough for Hannibal and Will to find the taste of it.

Had it been bitter and regretful or had it been tender and naive; had it been cruel or barely driven by
the awaken need of intimacy, neither of them could have tell. It had been simply too chaotic in its
intention.

Will stepped away first. Just a little brushing against the warm skin, nothing more, and it made the
whole world burn differently than usual for him. Made him weak in his knees as if he returned to the
past and was fifteen again.

Out of the blue he became a fool of the worst kind.

He could not let himself fall that way. Down so low that he would not stand a chance to pick himself
up ever again. He had to back off of a route so dangerous.

Deleterious influence of that familiar smoky scent; peculiar tastes or unavoidable inclinations.

The inconvenient compassion.

He took a few steps away from the man standing in front of him. From the sentiment that wanted to
come to the surface. This time he was sure that he would not be followed.

He left without any sound escaping his mouth, without any expression of being sorry in his eyes. He
turned back into the quiet of his own room.
"Will, are you awake? I've just finished preparing dinner. Please, feel free to join me, if you'd like to." The brunet didn't have it in him to say something adequate as an appropriate answer to the polite invitation but he wasn't sleeping either.

He had been somewhat dreaming though. Floating beyond the earth with his shapeless emotions coating him like an uncomfortable blanket; never fitting just right.

Will came out of the room few minutes after he had been called out. He couldn't sleep anymore, it was no use to try to forget what he had done. He wasn't thinking only about the kiss, he was thinking about the whole picture. He had decided to stay by Hannibal's side and there was no turning back now. He had fallen out of the world and flowed into the darkest fairytale writing itself. He had helped the process by merely existing in the same dimension as Hannibal Lecter.

Lost in thought, he stepped into their living room and looked around; Hannibal was sitting in a black chair and a table was set. There were two plates prepared and two whiskey glasses. Will frowned, puzzled. Hannibal rarely drank whiskey; its taste vulgar to his mouth, not refined enough.

"You came," Hannibal said and his eyes lit up a little. "I'm glad."

"I'm sorry. For being rude today. Or in general," Will confessed while he was settling down in a chair. "I'm really thankful for everything you've done lately. I mean... Stitching me up, taking care of me... I appreciate that, despite my behaviour."

"No apologies needed." Hannibal had a little smile on his lips when he added calmly: "It is understandable that you're confused and angry. You've found yourself in a completely new situation and your life's been turned upside down again. To a large extent, because of me."

Will sighed. "Yes, because of you. Again." He couldn't master the tone of his voice and that way Hannibal could smell the sentiment from far away.

The brunet looked at Hannibal. They were both gazing into each other's eyes for a few seconds with an unspoken message still to be conveyed, before they looked away. Will cleared his throat. "What's for dinner?"

"Fillet Wellington served with mixed vegetables, also with golden and crusty pastry. I hope it is not too sophisticated of a recipe for your palate and you will tolerate it," Hannibal replied with a sense of fake politeness.

You delight. I tolerate.

Will didn't say a word. He simply nodded his head and waited for Hannibal to do the honours. The man stood up and left the room. It didn't take long for him to come back with a large, silver tray.

Will swallowed hard when the pleasant smell hit his nostrils. Then his eyes caught Hannibal's glance.

"Bon appétit," Hannibal said and put the dish on Will's plate gracefully.

Will enjoyed it. He had never eaten it served like this before. It was miraculous as usual. After all, it was the doing and artwork of Hannibal Lecter, the uncanny chef.

"The meal was delicious. Thank you." Will acknowledged when they both finished eating.
"My pleasure." Hannibal's lips curled up slightly. "I only hope it didn't hurt too much to eat a solid meal. Your cheek doesn't look grievous anymore, it's healing quite nicely to be fair, yet you ought to be careful nevertheless."

"It doesn't ache that much, I'm fine." Will's eyes fixed on the table intently, carving some strange, imaginary design in its surface.

Hannibal stuffed down a hum of disapproval. However, he knew that not taking care of himself was one of Will's natural traits. Without making an offer, he poured the whiskey into one of the glasses and handed it to the brunet. Will thanked for the drink and took a sip. The liquor was bitter and burned hot in his throat.

He almost forgot how much he missed its simple taste.

"Would you like to go for a walk? It's nice outside, maybe a little cold in the late afternoon, but very breezy. I'd like to show you the area. For the most part, you've been resting since we got here. However, it is crucial for your full recovery to get fresh air." Hannibal looked at Will expectantly.

The younger man laughed a little jerkily. "You don't have to come up with some patient-doctor stuff to make me go with you. I would go anyway."

Hannibal's brow arched curiously. "Really?" He inquired teasingly.

"I am here, aren't I?"

***

The light was piercing through a cluster of trees. Hannibal's face was upturned in the fresh, windy air, gazing up into an expanse of greenery unfolding before his murky eyes. He savoured a pleasant chill settling beneath his clothing; breaking through skin to greet his bones.

Will watched him walk through the forest from the corner of his eye, completely silent. Woods stretched all around them, the only companions on their little trip, yet the most devoted ones. The forest was embracing them, welcoming with its roots and long limbs. The branches were dancing on the wind with such delicate grace.

Hannibal looked at Will eventually. He seemed to be somewhere else though, his absent gaze a reminder of ghostly memories and the past.

Will couldn't find fitting words to express the emptiness he felt, created by the physical and mental distance between them. Thus he said nothing, just scowled a little.

He looked around the area, his lungs filled with breezy cold air. It was peaceful to the point of annoyance.

His expression saddened after walking for a few more minutes. The silence was no longer pleasant, it was deafening because of its dark implications.

"Wait," he said out of breath and stopped walking through the forest floor. "I can't go on like this, Hannibal."

The other man only looked in his direction briefly. His posture adamant, face unchanged.

"I need to... We need to talk it out." He flinched when saying the words. Talking had never done any good.
"What exactly do you want to talk over?" He heard Hannibal's weary voice. "I wish we could leave the past where it is placed carefully in the ground, the only doom which is glooming far away, in the distance. Irrelevant for our future..."

"We both know that you don't mean that. You're haunted by the past tenses as much as I am, or even more, considering your whole history. Considering how you'd risen from your own beginnings." Will squinted his eyes when confronted with the sun. "Past is engraved all over our minds and bodies. You are engraved all over me, Hannibal."

The force, the heavy pressure, with which the younger man said the last sentence, sent shivers down into Hannibal's insides. "The scars," the older man finished in a strained voice as his jaws clenched. "The scars of the past will not allow the bliss of bloodless forgetfulness to settle in for good." Will looked away. His gaze fell upon a rotten wooden bench nearby. His throat tightened.

"The scars I gave you, that is," Hannibal stated in a low husky voice. "The teacup's broken. It's never going to gather itself back together again. Is now the moment when you reach out to your younger self and lock eyes to seek understanding and familiar relief of simply giving up?"

Will drank every bitter word and swallowed all of them. His eyes glistened dangerously.

"I am not giving up. Nor am I letting go of the past."

Hannibal stilled. "Are you saying goodbye to me again?"

Will exhaled all of the air he'd been inadvertently holding in his lungs. "You idiot." He gasped, moving towards the man; he took Hannibal's face in his hands and kissed him roughly without a warning. "Stop assuming things I didn't say and start listening to me."

The older man gazed upon his face longingly, just like he was already gone; a ghost of his own designing.

"And stay with me, would you!" Will cried out angrily. He could see Hannibal's senses sharpening because of the unpleasant tone that Will used. The younger man didn't care about the rudeness now. "D-damn it, just s-stay with me..."

Hannibal's features softened a little bit. "I'm standing right beside you."

"I hold dear everything you've given me, Hannibal. Even those scars which I owe to your unrelenting wrath upon me and to my own careless decisions. Based on the revenge I couldn't erase from my heart, I was followed blindly by the constant nagging need to reckon." Will smiled wistfully. "I've forgiven us both for the cruelty. I can't get it out of my head, though. Everything stays."

Hannibal put his slightly shaking hand on Will's shoulder and tenderly caressed the skin through his jacket. "I'd had no mercy on you," the older man whispered breathlessly.

"I got what I deserved, didn't I?" Will's lips trembled, so he pressed them together in a firm line, then winced. "Mercy had never been on your list of gifts for me."

Hannibal swallowed a sudden lump in his throat, but said nothing. Will's head fell into the other man's chest, a sigh shuddering out in a drifting puff of air. He couldn't take it anymore. The tension. "The distance between us kills me the most, yet I find myself scared to move forward and get closer..." He confessed.
"I know." Hannibal's voice sounded broken, almost devastated. "I know."

He repeated the words a few more times, each time holding the brunet closer and tighter to his chest; the squeeze of his arms made Will numb in a surprisingly comforting way. Then he stilled, when Hannibal pressed soft lips against his temple, hands sliding from his shoulders to rest at his waist.

It was childish, for sure. To breathe light of romance into their depraved and twisted souls. Will was fully aware of how many times they had hurt each other over and over again. He knew the enormous weight of abuse, cruelty and violence that was now engraved in their minds, how they both delighted in it and found nourishment in putting each other to a test. How they liked and hated their bloodied, intimate ways of communication. All things considered, it was beyond the point of foolishness to torment the other with tender touches and soft whispers.

Beyond salvation.

They would stay like this forever, wrapped around each other, afraid to let go, if it weren't for Will to unfurl the truth that followed the faint whispering.

"It hadn't been the knife you gutted me with which pained the most..." He began to speak, voice still shaky, his body beginning to tremble violently at the memory, always vivid within the confines of his mind. "It had been the unendurable void, which it caused when you removed it from my body and left me shuttered and empty. Completely alone and with nothing to hold onto..."

Will lifted his head and looked hard into Hannibal's eyes, then continued his tale.

"I would stick to that sharp blade of yours, had you only let me crawl to you that way. But you'd been ruthless and you'd intended to leave me there to rot in my grief. You had done it deliberately, and you would do it again, if you had to. If I made you." Will's eyes filled with a sense of certainty. "And the worst part is that I can't even blame you for that since it is such a fitting punishment..."

Because you know how much I crave the intimacy, Will left the final words unsaid.

Hannibal's face darkened, lips parted. He let out a warning hiss, and before the younger man could even protest, Hannibal had already tugged him sharply and dragged across the forest floor; with no remorse, he pulled Will against the tree and pinned him in place with his own body, yanking his messy hair hard. The strong muscles of Hannibal's torso were cracking down the smaller frame with each squeeze.

"H-han-" Will whimpered feebly, salty tears filling his eyes.

"Hush, mylimasis." He heard the unknown consonants slurred in a breathy voice, warm air near his ear like a warning, yet pleasingly tingling. As Hannibal kneeled down in front of him, the whole world started spinning. Will choked on air, trying to hold still without quivering.

Hannibal stared up into his eyes with the murky mystery hidden behind his own. Will had never seen such devotion in them before.

See?

Affection briefly danced in the older man's eyes and then he looked down at Will's shaking frame; grip on his waist still there, dangerously tight and threatening, Hannibal's face stuck to Will's stomach through the layers of clothing. The blonde growled in a low voice, more like a wild animal than a man, and impatiently lifted Will's shirt up to taste the rawness of pale softness. A damp tongue licked the belly across the scar. Thick and coarse skin met the eagerness of Hannibal's lips and teeth when he sucked on it daintily, yet ponderously. With purpose he'd been kissing the marked spot over and
over again, till the other man started moaning shamelessly, not able to hold back the sounds escaping 
his dry mouth.

"P-please, mhh-" Will heard himself yelping with sudden pleasure. "Ahh...! W-why..."

He tried to turn away from the captivating touch of another, but it was no use since Hannibal held 
tight, glued to his oversensitive skin. He could do nothing but run his fingers through the older man's 
hair, pulling it gently. A hot wave hit his face and chest when he gasped, feeling Hannibal's tongue 
inside his navel.

"Nhh!"

Hannibal heard the needy respond to his demonstration of passion; he looked up at Will's face and 
saw a beautiful, glorious god cloaked in pure pleasure. He couldn't turn his gaze away from such a 
sight. Will's vulnerability caught him off guard, he could already sense the familiar need, the painful 
tightness in his lower stomach, the rising bulge in his dress pants.

The dense wall of agonising arousal.

"N-no... D-don't-" The younger man was begging incoherently while taking a deep breath; his throat 
felt dry and sore, the torture never ending. Hannibal ignored his wishes altogether; his wet muscle 
unforgiving, marking the lower parts of Will's abdomen with a newfound curiosity. Will yanked 
Hannibal's hair forcefully only when he felt the exhilarating touch of lips sinking dangerously low; 
rushed fingers flattering and trying to take off his jeans.

The darkest desire.

"Hann-nibal!" Will cried out hoarsely, then held hot air in his lungs. With eyes blinking rapidly, he 
sensed abrupt panic creeping in, right under his skin. The awaken lust didn't help him at all. He tried 
to pull Hannibal away with hands pressed strongly against his forehead. "S-stop it, I c-can't, I 
can't..."

Then everything turned white and empty again. He heard Hannibal's heavy breathing and he looked 
down at him to see the man's glistening, teary gaze. Glassy.

Will frowned in surprise.

"A-are you... Are you crying?" He whispered the question quietly, not believing what he was seeing 
in front of him. Bewildered, he only tilted his head slightly.

The man gave no effort to reply. He embraced Will's waist carefully and pressed his warm face 
against the irritated skin, closely to the scar of his own making.

The brunet was all but composed now, Hannibal's cheek pressed softly to his stomach. The skin 
burned, blood rushed through his veins and the tears were floating from his fogged eyes.

_is Hannibal... in love with me?_

Unravelled within the seconds of the newfound carnal bliss, Will glared wearily from under his wet 
eyelashes. The malign vulnerability within him screamed for more, body itching with the want. He 
got in touch with his inner paradise, full of hellish gates and passages that could become his true, 
honoured home... Will would never forget those urgent touches or Hannibal's utterly damaged 
expressions as everything remained inside the space of his Memory Palace.

When he started sobbing, he wasn't the only one to tremble because of the unbearable emotion and
craving for connection. Was it a dream or was it real? Or had it been always both?

Yes.

"Every emotion is pain, just echoed and heard at different frequencies..." He heard the chanting words coming from Hannibal's open mouth pressed loosely into the soft texture of his naked skin. He savoured the intimacy of that moment.
Love Is A Space Opened Behind Your Back

Chapter Notes

Inspiration: "Into The Fire" by Thirteen Senses, "Muscle Museum" by Muse

She had something to confess to
But you don't have the time so
Look the other way
You will wait until it's over
To reveal what you'd never shown her
Too little much too late

Too long trying to resist it
You've just gone and missed it
It's escaped your world

Three months later

"And what do you think?" Hannibal asked when his friend entered the room.

A glass table had been set. It was time for dinner; warm, alluring and disturbing all at once. The decorations were beautifully placed, the gourmet food full of fantasy and vision, the fruit colourful and tempting with its savour, sweet smell, the main course - still to be served.

The table was a piece of art.

Will could feel the compelling ambiance which the room was filled with. He locked eyes with the other man, the one and only host of the darkest, the most uncanny banquets. Matchless feasts for the world to witness. He only nodded his head slightly in approval.

Profoundness of bonding gives birth to simplicity of gestures.

"That's what I thought. You will like the main design that I've composed for you even more," the blonde assured, subtly animated now.

"I surely will."

Will took a look around the parlour. Everything there spoke of excellence; all of the details carved with perfection. A meticulous scene to be a part of. Not only the table presented itself as fancy and ornate but the whole space screamed elegance. A floor was black and glassy, walls were golden with a gravelly texture and a tremendous, crystal chandelier dangling from the ceiling. The light was bright, a little yellowish.

Balmy, almost soothing.
"It is all superbly beautiful, Hannibal," he admitted contentedly.

He wanted to melt into this picture, then let someone frame it and leave it as an eternal moment of calming bliss. To Will's own surprise, he indeed felt at peace. Mostly.

"Thank you, Will. I tried my best, please, forgive me, if you find it a bit overwhelming, I only wished for the ideal circumstances for the unique occasion..." Hannibal stated with a sense of urgency.

"I still don't know what's this all about," Will pointed out and his gaze went to Hannibal's face as the man smiled at him.

"Please, take a seat then."

Will didn't have enough courage to refuse the offer. He positioned himself in a chair, after he had been precisely instructed where to sit, because - as it turned out - Hannibal had already made a special arrangement when it came to dining order during this evening.

The chairs and their engravings were everything but tacky and simple, of course. Will sighed silently, after having relaxed himself a bit.

"Today's the day, Will. Although I strongly hold onto my sublime tastes, tonight my message is quite uncomplicated. You know the dark and the light standing behind the curtains of all the refinement. You and you only could see it through and see it for real. For what it is." The older man was standing impassively on the other side of the table while speaking in a deliberate manner. He looked like a solid rock protruding from the horizon. Always perfectly intact; mighty demigod who had never felt abashed because of the true nature of his own beauty. Will shuddered.

Serene and severe darkness all at once.

"It is the reason why you and I are here. I have done numberless things for you and to you as well, not every each of them I am fully proud of. Still, I have no regrets. I only wished I had done one thing in the past... I wished I had showed you my gratitude in a proper way. I am grateful that you are here with me now, thus, please, take a gift that I am about to give you."

After having said that, Hannibal looked his friend in the eyes to see a reaction. He saw in them what he'd wished for; the slight spark of curiosity and anticipation. Hannibal's lips curved upwards, then he left the room and went to a kitchen without a further explanation.

When he came back, Will was still sitting at the table. He was completely immovable, gazing in the blank space between the windows. He focused his eyes on the kitchen's door the second Hannibal stood in them.

He wasn't standing alone, though.

"What-the-" Will began to speak awkwardly, then he reconsidered opening his mouth at all. For a long minute he couldn't believe what he was just seeing, presented in front of him. He was speechless.

"That's supposed to be your gift for me?" The brunet asked incredulously. "What kind of expression of gratefulness is it, Hannibal?"

Will stood up. He moved few steps forward to scrutinize the situation.

"Hello, doctor Du Maurier. Are you staying for the dinner?" Will inquired. His voice didn't have to
be full of malice for the woman to understand her position. She already looked daunted, dispirited even.

"So it seems," Bedelia answered grudgingly. Will took a good look at her. She was wearing a dark, low-necked dress. Her hair was fixed up in a very elegant manner. She was perfectly dressed up for the dinner party and Will had to assume that she hadn't prepared herself willingly for the occasion.

The dress was long but the material had the cuts, thus Will could see exactly what was wrong. Or rather, what was missing and why the woman had a loss written all over her face while trying to stand straight. She couldn't so she was leaning against Hannibal.

One of her legs was gone, indicating the price for being the special guest at Hannibal Lecter's party.

"Yes, it really does," Will said quietly, squinting his eyes lightly.

Hannibal was beyond the point of amusement. Will knew that much.

"I think that our dear guest wants to rest for a bit, am I correct?" Hannibal smirked at them and helped Bedelia sit in one of the chairs.

"You always are. Your generous hospitality knows no end and touches me... deeply, I'm afraid."
The woman straightened and sat upright.

Hannibal only nodded his head a little to show that he appreciated the remark.

"Will, may I ask you to help me with something in the kitchen, please?" He added with apparent joy.

Will followed him without a verbal response since it wasn't needed at this point. The show had already begun, thus nobody could interrupt the chain of events.

"What do you need me for?" Will finally asked when Hannibal was looking for something in one of the kitchen shelves.

The older man turned over to face him. He had that look on his face which Will had already seen for several times. Like he was about to say something essential and revealing; something that was worthy of being heard.

And he stopped before he even started, giving away just a flaring gaze. Will didn't dare to look away. And then Hannibal eventually spoke:

"It is your night, Will. My desire is to give you what you need. What you deserve to get. Now it is entirely up to you how it will end for us. Make a choice. This time I will not take it from you."

Having said that, Hannibal approached the younger man. Will blinked when pleasant warmth caressed his forehead. "Choose life, my reckless boy."

The whisper sounded more like humming and somehow it set Will's face on fire. The blood pressure rose and it pulsed inside his head and ears, it was filled with anticipation or maybe pure excitement even. It came out of nowhere, just like Hannibal's sudden movements.

"Do you understand, Will?" The question hovered over the younger man and permeated his insides; he felt the sudden dread and a sense of doom in his bones. Crimson eyes looked upon him, Hannibal's hands were already on his cheeks and cradled the skin gently. The touch was so soft that Will wanted to melt into liquid and never come back to being himself again. It felt almost too nice to be touched, yet too real, too corrupting.
Dangerous, he thought immediately.

"I do," he muttered back faintly, barely saying anything at all. Arms braced on both sides of his back in one moment; he gasped for air, trapped in Hannibal's embrace. He didn't have strength to resist the man so he surrendered completely.

"Imagine how magnificent you can become tonight... You can transgress on every level possible. You can become what you truly yearn to be. Don't deny yourself the opportunity to fully exist and shine in a way that even the skies can't." Hannibal maimed him with beautiful visions carved in words. He caressed his hair gently.

Sky is full of chemicals without bloody roots. Filled with stellar fuel combusting, burning without a purpose. Sky sets its own limits. I don't have to set any rules to follow from now on, Will's inner voice stepped in. It sounded like Hannibal's. Again.

Will felt weaker and weaker under the tender touch. "Hannibal, s-stop..." He mumbled incoherently, holding onto the other man tightly just to contradict himself even more. Hannibal growled softly in response.

"I could never stop when it comes to you," he stated the obvious. "That's why we are where we are."

Will didn't need to listen to these incantations anymore. In one motion, he claimed the older man's mouth and entwined their hands hurriedly. It didn't last long as Hannibal wound his arms around his waist, fingers pushing into the smooth flesh underneath his grey dress shirt. Will only moaned quietly and moved his lips against his.

It was beautiful.

Will wrapped his fingers around the fabric of Hannibal's tie and pulled lightly, a small thing to give him a bit of control. When Hannibal slipped his tongue into trembling mouth, Will groaned loudly, eyes fluttering closed. He reciprocated the gesture, clasping their wet muscles together and letting them dance to some inner melody playing in the background of his mind. It was getting hard to breathe while they were kissing, passion winning over the reason. Will had to bite Hannibal's lower lip to stave off further desire. He could feel how his blood had not only rushed to his cheeks but also to the lower parts of his body.

Hannibal gasped when Will drew back to escape the growing lust.

"You're still trying to guide me into a choice which you consider to be right," Will said breathlessly, "You just stopped using violence as the only sword of manipulation."

"Violence had never been the ultimate mean which I'd wanted to pursued you with." Hannibal smiled knowingly.

I've never known myself as well as I know myself when I'm with him; the words came back like a boomerang and slipped in Will's consciousness.

A sense of freedom which had risen from being this naked in front of the other was so overpowering that it almost made Will cry.

"Shouldn't we...?" He began to speak.

"Yes, our guest, of course! It would be extremely rude to make her wait even more, wouldn't it? Although I gave her little something to relax. A mild sedative, that is," Hannibal replied suggestively.
Will's face flushed. He only shook his head in slight disapproval. "What was I supposed to help you with?"

"Here, take this." Hannibal reached out to take a bottle from a cabinet. He handed the bottle over. "It is wine that I've saved specifically for tonight."

The brunet took the bottle of wine and left the room. Bedelia sat there in the same position as few minutes before. Her rapid breathes the only sign of discomfort that she was giving away.

"Dinner's ready." They both heard and looked each other in the eyes.

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Will took a swing and with all the force he got he stabbed the blonde woman, just slightly beneath her left shoulder blade. His jaw tightened when he heard a painful cry. His blood was running hot, just as he imagined her blood to be. The woman fell down on her knees, coughing. Will wanted to savour the moment so the cut of his knife was not deep enough for the prey to bleed out immediately. Agitated by the sight of redness running down the woman's dress, he groaned low in his chest, then slammed the blonde's head. His victim dropped to the floor completely.

Will thought that Bedelia looked befouled now, lying helplessly on the glassy floor. Wrecked beauty, now entirely useless. Just like all the passive beauty truly is. Will let out a low chuckle.

"You're delightful to watch, Bedelia, I must admit." Will tilted his head, licking dry lips. "You carry the weight of your darkest impulses so carefully. You cover them in such an admirable form that all one can see is the gracefulness..."

The brunet brushed a rough thumb across her mouth; his eyes shining when he felt the warm breath on his skin. "...You wear your person just fine. You hold your head up just the right way, you drink refined wines with steadiness of your slender fingers, you talk slowly... Putting pressure on words exactly where needed..."

The woman wrapped her small hand around Will's wrist, pulling desperately. A silent prayer for compassion. The man shrugged it off, wincing a bit.

"You've been perfect within your own storytelling. Yet your narration is going to end now, and your beauty will be utterly wasted in the process. Do you know why that is?" He whispered thrilled, enjoying himself way too much. The shame couldn't come up to the surface somehow. He lifted his glittering gaze from her body, already covered with crimson of the darkest kind, and looked at the corner of the room where stood Hannibal, unflinching as always. They stared at each other for a second, then Will sighed softly, eyes fluttering.

"Your righteousness and reckless behaviour..." Bedelia gasped, raspy breath the prettiest melody humming inside Will's ears. "...They break everything you touch..."

Will laughed.

"You know nothing about the recklessness. You're too static in your posture to even understand the basic moves of dancing with the shadows of fate and death entwined." Will gave away a predatory snarl; his cold hands clenched around the woman's neck, grip tightened when he felt her struggling a bit. He moved like a mongoose when confronted with a snake, although it wasn't a cunning, slick cobra which he was faced with now. It was an easy hunt physically, the real thrill came from the emotional battle. He wanted to make a point, once and for all settle the result. To announce the champion, to win over the past. "You would have never been the last of Bluebeard's Wifes, Bedelia."
You're too brittle. And you're not tenacious enough."

Will's breath hitched when he finally said it. His emotions naked, his resentment unmasked. He felt a nagging flick of pain at the memory of their shared conversations. He ached all over, his lower stomach clenched with unfamiliar need; not sexual, yet deeply physical. He looked down on the psychiatrist's horrified face, eyes wide opened. The recognition hit her hard, sending shivers down the spine. Will lifted the corner of his lips, smiling knowingly. He also heard Hannibal's steady steps behind him. Somehow Will hadn't captured the moment the man disappeared from his sightline.

"Extreme acts of cruelty require high level of empathy..." The brunet let out breezily; he hugged Bedelia tightly from behind, smothering her with his palm pressed firmly to her nose and mouth. "Your death is the most average, ordinary thing in your life. No elegance, no poetry, no exquisite value of your aphorisms. Since you don't get to say the last word. This is my design."

Will looked his victim straight in the eyes, simply because the fading light in her glance was turning him on. The woman was trying to shift under the pressure of his strong limbs but couldn't do much. The panic rose in her, caused by bitter realisation of unavoidable end. The final dangling of weak hands before going limp made Will tingly all over his body. The inferno was burning up his insides, filling his lungs and throat with smoke. It was beyond description.

Cathartic.
Love Is Madness Keeping You Alive

Chapter Notes

Inspiration: "R U Mine" by Arctic Monkeys, "Hysteria" by Muse

*It's holding me, morphing me
And forcing me to strive
To be endlessly cold within
And dreaming I'm alive...*

"Will." He heard a rumbled tone somewhere near him but couldn't focus on that. He had been put in a strange trance, dreamy pleasure had gone over his body.

"Will." His own name had echoed in his skull like a benediction; his eyes absent, filled with blood spatters. He smiled to himself, not concerned about the reality. The sickening sweet smell of death and decay had corrupted all of his imagination.

"Will!" A slap across his cheek put him out of a strange dreamland with a sense of stinging and he found himself drifted to the surface.

To the shore.

He saw Hannibal in the full glory. His face filled with joy, the eternal paradise trapped somewhere behind his eyelids. A smug grin tugged to his lips, a hand pulling forward to settle on Will's neck. He caressed the spot gently, never leaving the younger man's eyes. His glare full of adoration. Will tilted his head back trustfully, eager to be touched. When Hannibal's fingertips scratched the vulnerable skin on his neck, he purred like a cat. The intensity of staring into each other's faces, so closely that they were almost brushing their noses, overwhelmed Will to the point where he needed to shut his eyes closed.

He gave in to the gentleness of fingers pressing into his still itching skin. The moment he felt the squeeze tighten around his throat, pushing against the trachea, he moaned loudly, satisfied with a sensation of tightness, light strangling. Enough to bruise, not enough to take his life away. A steady oppression.

A paddle.

"William..." A heavy flow of air attacked his earlobe with a foreign sound of his full name, never used before in the mouth of another, then a wet tongue slipped into his ear, forcing out a pitiful voice from Will which sounded strained and desperate. "If you don't leave this room right now, I'm afraid that you're going to be ravished to the very core of your bones." Strained voice followed. "I'll violate you against your will. And this time I am not going to hold back." Hannibal's guttural threat sank in.

The promise.
The finality of the statement hit him hard and fast. Will flashed his eyes open in a snap. His lower stomach clenched with dread and need, entangled in a thick net of involuntary desire.

"What d-did you just..." He trailed off, voice cracked, eyebrows furrowed. Then he did see the deadly arousal reflected in maroon eyes as the older man swallowed thickly, his shoulders tensing, showing the attacker's stiffness in his posture. Will looked down at his clenched fists, then laid eyes on his taut crotch. "Shit. You're fucking serious," the younger man blurted out, the bile in his throat. He gritted his teeth with growing terror. Hurriedly, he yanked away from the grip of Hannibal's hand on his neck and stumbled back with a gasp, losing his balance. He looked at the fresh corpse lying in front of him, clothed with blood and looking with an empty glare, eyes still open.

Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

He opened his mouth wide, lips dry and numb somehow. He stood up, wobbling a little on his feet. He was about to say something more when he saw the other man begin to rise from the ground. Will felt beats of sweat on his forehead and breath speeding up.

His heart bumped rapidly with fear when Hannibal took the first step toward him. Will retreated, now hardly aware where the exit was. After he had started running, he couldn't stop, carried by the anxiety crawling up his skin. His eyes itched, vision blurred, but he didn't turn back or peered over his shoulder to see if the other man was right behind him.

He entered a big room, one of the last in the hall on the first floor. It was a cabinet, full of documents and books.

It wasn't the best space for him, but it wouldn't be wise to back down now either, thus he closed the door shut and put his back against it. He let out a breathy whine. He ached all over, his body still driven by adrenaline from his kill, blood under his fingernails. He felt like he was one kill away from joining the rotten society of corpses.

He heard a hushed noise. Barely audible.

"I know where you are, Will." The younger man stopped breathing. "I always know where to find you, just like you always know where to find me."

Will hissed, and dull pain caught him by surprise when he stumbled forward, being pushed by some force. He fell to his knees, wincing.

"N-nnn... No." He groaned helplessly when he saw Hannibal hovering above him with a fierce expression on his face, the door broken down with just one swoop. Will put fists in front of him, blocking the way. Hannibal growled disapprovingly, pulling him up by the hand to quickly tuck him in his arms.

"For fuck's sake, H-hannibal... S-stop!" He cried out, a solid punch thrown at the older man's face. He backed away, dazed a little. "Have you lost your mind?!"

Hannibal looked at him through the curtain of messy hair. He bared his teeth, then wiped away the blood spilling from his upper lip. Will had put all of his strength into the hit.

"Rude."

Will leaned against a wooden desk, not able to move further. Incapacitated by an unknown power, he only breathed sharply, watching Hannibal's furious face. Like it was too magnificent, too stunning...
to run away from it when revealed; in the darkness, directed at him and for him alone to see.

Inhumane. Transcendent.

It almost felt like that one unfortunate time in the kitchen. The time when he had been left behind as a shuttered, broken teacup which he truly had been at that moment. All of those memories came back to him in a quick series of sharp pictures, only blurred on the edges. The fear, paralysing to the point of mental exhaustion. A heavy weight that one has to surrender to, and become frail and limp when met with the feeling of being... awestruck.

"S-stay... away, p-please-" An anxious, weary mutter echoed through the space between them; Will closed his eyes, soft fluttering of his lashes sent shivers down Hannibal's back.

A change in the air, shift in positions; a predator astir, animated by the simple note of resignation coming from his prey, laid open before him like it hadn't been fully aware of the true nature of dark intentions and sharp desires.

But Will was well aware of everything when his bones hit the cold surface of the desk. He cried out, sprawled on the table in a flash. Strong limbs tussling, bruising, nails biting; Will was swiftly pinned down with his wrists above his head. "How am I supposed to stay away when you're like this. You smell so deliciously..." Hannibal hissed while crippling the brunet forcefully. "You smell of blood, sweat, tears, fear and... Arousal. How to resist all of that, I do not know."

Will gasped again, lustful touch of hands on his bare skin, his dress shirt being torn apart and then left somewhere on the cold floor. He felt warm, impatient fingers on the material of his pants. He only closed his eyes shut, not able to resist the tension. It was suffocating, hard to stand the heat with Hannibal's heavy body against him, squashing and persistent.

Hannibal took off his dress pants. Then he looked Will over. Carefully. Slowly. Like he was about to devour him, in one bite. He licked his lips, mouth opening just slightly.

"You are true beauty in the world of ugliness and mediocrity, Will." The younger man winced at the remark, he couldn't listen to it; being praised and admired by the beast, and secretly taking delight in it, and maybe not so secretly after all, it was doing things as much to his twitching body as to his wicked mind. It was wrong. Wrong on so many levels.

"Do you always compliment your food before dinner?" Will teased, voice strained, fear coming to the surface again.

Hannibal smiled. "I will swallow you whole if you keep playing with me like that."

Next thing he felt was all about tasting the flavour, taking the first bite; sharp teeth against his neck, then lower, flaming bites into the fresh meat on his torso. Vision blurred with hot redness. Lascivious lips crossing the road to meet his nipples. They hardened when met with furious touches. Will whined against his will.

Hannibal didn't stop there, he followed down the path of his sternum, to his more sensitive parts where the scar was shining with the memory of the past that they shared together. Will held his breath in, aggressive tongue tasting hungrily the thick lines on his stomach like an animal that would lick its cubs' wounds clean as an act of protection or lick the captured prey to mark the possession, to remind the whole world of its ownership. Hannibal moaned quietly, while pressing his wet lips to Will's belly.
"Your thigh. It needs to be taken care of," the older man whispered with a raspy voice.

He didn't wait for the permission, just went straight to caressing Will's leg. There was a shallow wound, made by Bedelia some minutes ago. She'd been fighting a little at first, trying to have her way with a simple fork. Nothing sophisticated, although nobody could blame the desperate for using desperate methods.

It didn't work out, though. Will smiled, even now, at the memory. He really wasn't feeling the guilt. It was utterly freeing experience. "Hann-!" He yelped, breathless, feeling the tongue near the injury, and lips cupping raw and torn piece of flesh.

Hannibal sucked the blood, passion engraved in maroon eyes. He looked up at Will's flushed face, and it was such a ravenous glare that it sent shivers down Will's spine, his lower stomach clamped with sudden flow of desire. The want.

"Will." He heard a feral snarl, the warning. Without the second one, the older man pressed his lips against his crotch, still clothed in a thin layer of white underwear. It corresponded just right with the blood tucked to Hannibal's lips.

Will panted, a heavy tremor finding its way to take over his whole body in a swing of lashing pleasure. He struggled to free himself from the overwhelming, unbearable touch, but Hannibal's hands weren't letting go off him enough to push away.

Hannibal could feel blood filling his mouth and lungs, his insides thrilled with the taste of the man wrestling and wriggling underneath him, not so violently like before, but still struggling against the pleasure. He wanted to teach Will a lesson. He stopped sucking on the swelling erection through the boxers. He stripped the younger man from the last layer of material to see him completely bare before his eyes. Nude, naked, spread, unfolded.

*Only his to watch. His to take.*

With a flick of his hand, the older man removed his own tie, holding it tight. "I don't think you are able to hold still, Will."

The brunet scowled, then stared at the tie for a moment. He looked down at Hannibal with eyes wide open. "D-don't..." He whispered, sweat of fear shone on his forehead.

Hannibal smiled a bit viciously, straightening to hover about the other man. Without asking, he kissed him roughly, leaving them both out of breath. "Stay with me. I want you to listen," Hannibal whispered in a husky voice, then pressed his lips against Will's again; fierce embrace of death echoing with the distant smell of smoke.

Will surrendered to the kiss, pulling his tongue into Hannibal's mouth. A little needy moan escaped his lips, mangled and lost somewhere between aggressive licks of their muscles. He felt firm pressure of a knee pressed against his painful erection, his senses struck with a white hotness, his irritated cock twitching against the rough touch. A whimpering sob echoed through the walls.

Hannibal's stomach clenched. The pressure of his knee increasing slightly just to trigger off more vulnerable reactions. It was sweet and unnerving at the same time, and he needed more of it. He kissed Will for the last time, then bit down his lower lip just to bruise.

"Y-you don't want me to l-listen..." Will's voice was barely a whisper. "You want to fill me up with yourself. All of me. With all of you." He added in a strained voice, heat coming up to his face again. "To leave me no breath to inhale. Menacing words in my head. Scars of passion on my bare skin."
Smoky scent in my lungs. Constant threat in the air between us..."

Hannibal's face was shining brightly with arousal as he listened while Will continued to speak, the tie in Hannibal's hands tightening.

"Your hands eager to claim, fingers eager to explore. Your mouth ready to suck. Your tongue about to swallow me whole." Will's face flushed even more, his teeth tightening, lips curving. "Your... cock." He put pressure on the word. "Do you really want to fuck me so badly you can't even control yourself? In your mind, is it less harming alternative than killing me and devouring on your dining table?"

He knew that the mocking tone wouldn't take him anywhere good. He reeked of dread and arousal too much to care, though. It was all too itchy for him to stay passive while being eaten with crude brutality of the starving monster.

And hunger, well, it needs to be fed one way or another, Will thought.

Next thing he knew he had already been pinned down again by his wrists, heady snarl near his ear: "Who said I'm after less harming alternative with you at all? Maybe I just want your living taste under my tongue first. Maybe I wish to compare how it is to cut you open... both ways." Hannibal hissed viciously, rage and malice filling his whole posture up to his dark eyes. Will couldn't look away from the sight, his eyes fogging with angry tears. "Fucking you won't be much different from gutting you after all. The same blissful anguish and despair, the same bashful look on your face when I pierce you through. Same sweet whimpering of a hurt, mourning animal." Hannibal took away one hand and squeezed it tight around Will's neck. The throat closing, the younger man writhed helplessly with sudden panic, tears now streaming down his reddened cheeks burning with hellish fire. "Is this how you think of me, Will?"

The brunet stilled in his feverish attempts to get away from the punishing hands. "Do you imagine me to be this gloomy shadow taking everything from you? Always willing and happy to torment you? Do you think I delight in your suffering? Or you just want me to make you suffer anyway?" Hannibal snapped, his hoarse voice screaming through all the borders inside Will's head. Feeling the squeeze tightening around his windpipe, Will yanked away sharply from the grasp and aimed for the other man's face, trying to make him pay with his nails, marking as deeply as he could. Now they were both gasping, trying to outwrest the other. "F-fuck you, Hannibal!" He yelled lividly, now totally roused again and back to his fighting spirit.

"Such a perseverant warrior you are." The panting voice near his ear, then amused laugh followed. "With that sharp tongue of yours." The hiss resonated through the sounds of heavy breathing.

Will hit Hannibal's shoulder in response, trying to break free. He kicked his knee in a brutal manner and pushed it against the other man's crotch. Hannibal stumbled a little, and Will took advantage of that situation, maneuvering his way out; he straightened, pulling away from the desk he had been lying on for the last few most intense moments in his history of moments.

He needed to feel like he was the one setting the rules of the game for once. He wanted to turn the tables. He could see blood behind his eyelids.

"Me?! Am I really the vulgar one here? Or am I just rude beyond salvation in your eyes?" He teased viciously, almost yelling again; he moved forward, trying to hit the man in front of him; this time preparing for a right cross with full force. After having attacked Hannibal, he was met with an equal strength, the concentration of Hannibal's strike much more intimidating, the intensity thicker, even bolder than his own. Will wasn't in his full capability since he hadn't been faced with that much power on regular basis for quite some time. Last months had been spent on resting and trying to
recover. Till this day.

"Yes. Very much so, William." Hannibal hissed, moving towards the younger man again; he pushed one of his legs forward to make Will trip over. He pulled him down with all his force focused on pinning Will's face to the floor to the point when he heard a little whimper of pain coming from him. His eyes piercingly dark, malicious expression of no remorse. "You are outstandingly impolite. And you should know better than to make me angry. You know what happens to those."

Will laughed nervously, trying to inhale properly, worn out from the struggle. The cold floor pleasant to the touch, ready to steam off the heat inside him, Hannibal's fingers in his hair, holding him still - not so much.

"You think of yourself as a man of taste, but your vulgarity is showing off, D-\textit{doctor,}" the brunet said through clenched teeth, feeling the raw fury, the rage coming out again. The air was filled with unresolved tension. "\textit{Are you in for the kill tonight?}"

Hannibal tipped him over with one swing of movement, Will's back hitting the ground hard. He hissed in pain. The monster looked him in the eyes, unwavering. "I am."

Will yelped wounded, his throat aching with soreness when Hannibal bit into his neck furiously, filling his whole mouth with warm gush of blood. It was more than little, dense, queasily sweet, metallic, but quite different than his own. Intoxicating. He wanted to dive in deeper, to lose himself in the red heaven of life.

"H-Hann..." He heard a very strangled, brittle voice, it was weak though, not threatening enough to make him stop. He kept sucking on the blood, savouring it, until he felt sharp touch on his head, hair being yanked strongly. "I said. Stop." The voice grew louder.

He growled in a low voice, unfufilled. He backed away, looking at his injured prey with thick desire to hurt and turn to pieces. His expression became blank like he couldn't see anything.

"Hannibal," Will said alarmed, the uneasiness creeping its way in since he'd noticed the shift. The older man gave no reply, he only used what he was about to seconds ago. He got hold of Will's hands, now tensing against the attack, and pinned them above; then took his tie and finally, without any word spoken and ignoring visible objections, he wrapped it tightly around smaller wrists. When he was done with his chosen form of constriction, he laid down on Will's shuddering frame, huddling.

He glared at the startled boy then, looking his beautifully troubled face over, angst painted all over his frail, yet strong posture. He smiled faintly as he was appreciating the sight. "I love to watch you unravel in the most splendid ways," he said eventually, after long silence of just staring down the abyss of the younger man's upset eyes.

"It is... unfair." Will whimpered.

"Love is a battlefield. There's really nothing fair in a war like that," Hannibal whispered coldly. "No hold barred."

Will's eyes stung as he swallowed thickly. His lips started to tremble. Oh, did he feel the stab right where it belonged. It ached to look with eyes open.

He closed them shut. His restrained hands the only thing keeping him from breaking out to kill the assaulting beast with the most hurtful of touches.

"I crave to hear the frequency of your screams when you melt in my embrace, Will..." Hannibal
whispered with a hot air against his ear, then licked his earlobe teasingly. "...So now I'm going to see how your face changes from starvation and begging to pure pleasure when you come, taking me whole, buried deep inside you. Taking everything I'm about to give you." A lustful gasp entered the room, stuffing the space around them with a heady anticipation. "Assured by your heavenly cries how much you're enjoying this. Do you understand?"

Will screamed internally, not able to look the man in the eyes, totally absorbed by the floating, vivid images that were taking over his mind. The great imagination that he had was against him again. He was already hard, his member twitching violently against the pressure of the other man's stomach, pressing in. Hannibal could feel the taut erection brushing against the material of his shirt. He only smiled to himself, satisfied with Will's ever so honest body reactions. At least it wasn't denying the chemistry and wanting, Hannibal thought to himself.

"I asked you a question. Do you understand, Will?" Voice hard, unyielding. He traced his fingers across Will's arms, laid high above his head. The caress gentle, like it was used to lull him into a sense of security within the strong walls of everything unsafe.

Striking kindness meant to be the ultimate cause of his death.

A sharp hiss broke the silence. "I understand." Words unfurled, slurred a bit and thick on his tongue. Will fluttered his eyes open with a newfound calmness. His glare composed when he met Hannibal's murky eyes and caught them to hold onto something steady. His voice was not even, though, nor was his panting. Hannibal's face gleamed with light, a spark of dark energy.

He sat back on his heels with lust written behind his eyes, then he slowly took off his own shirt. Black dress pants and underwear followed quickly after. He put them away somewhere in the dark corner of the cabinet. Will didn't trace his movements, he had eyes only for the man who drew close again. Will eyed him diligently from head to toes, biting into his lower lip to cease further trembling. Face and chest warming when his gaze trailed over Hannibal's strong hips and thighs.

Will choked on a heavy sigh, fighting its way through his dry mouth. *Ruthless beauty*, words unspoken within the confines of his mind, confused more than ever before. He'd gone frozen, hypnotized, waiting with anxiety for the next attack of limbs and lips.

Hannibal leaned in, smothering mouth taking Will's breath away as he cried out shamelessly. A warm palm groped his twitching cock, then squeezed him firmly with long, sleek fingers. "Nhh..."

"Does it feel good?" He heard coarse tone all around his head, distracting him when the older man stopped kissing him. Will couldn't answer as the grip tightened and a rough thumb caressed his shaft all the way up to a wet head, throbbing painfully.

_Shit._

Hannibal had a smug grin on his lips, face lighten up, when Will started moaning faintly, trying to hold back every sound but not being able to. He kissed the brunet one more time, this time even more fervently; he caught Will's wet tongue between his sharp teeth, pulling. Will's eyes fluttered closed, lashes stuck to damp cheeks. Hannibal gave away shuddering breath, then bit and massaged his victim's lips till they became utterly swollen. His hand jerked Will's member in a severely slow manner, rubbing him forcefully until he heard the silent pleading that he'd been waiting for the whole time.

"S-stop teasing me... Hannibal, p-please." A broken groan cut the heavy air; the heat was unbearable even for the older man, he looked weary with all the tension, still not taken care of. He needed to feel it all, he'd been losing the last remaining scraps of control.
He stopped his hand, feeling the wetness of Will's fluids on his fingers. It didn't look like Will would last long in this situation. He smiled to himself, proud to see Will at his total mercy, tensing and shivering, face flushed, eyes already fogged with pleasure and unfocused.

*Filthy and shameless*, the mere thought of it made Hannibal's erection throb intensively, a vein in his cock pulsing violently. Gently he pressed his slick fingers towards Will's tight entrance, instant hotness striking him. Will tensed against the touch, letting out a quiet whimper of uneasiness. "H-hann!" He muttered, his bound hands wriggling with a little flick of panic entering his whole body. He snapped his eyes open, inhaling air sharply.

The blonde man locked eyes with him, his gaze gleaming with something akin to pure greed, the never ending appetite. Somehow it was soothing and Will found himself not able to look away. Hannibal's fingers didn't stop the adventure, though; he traced his tips across soft skin of Will's buttocks, then he struck again with a bit more force, pressing in between his ass cheeks. Sensing Will's hissing, he closed his mouth with his own, rubbing tenderly to distract him from the upcoming pain.

"Aghhh...!" Will mumbled through their wet kiss as Hannibal worked his finger through the tight pressure of the outer ring of muscles; he pushed one finger in, then softly added one more, trying to massage the hot spot inside and make it loosen just slightly.

"Relax, Will." He demanded roughly between the kisses, then licked Will's lips all over with his tongue and looked him sharply in the eyes again. "I am not going to hurt you," he whispered in a fluttering of air, tender tone sinking in Will's consciousness. With one hand being free, the older man began to caress Will's ribs. A small gesture to reassure him, to calm his jagged nerves.

It was not helpful much since Will was tensed all over, his fervent glare not escaping Hannibal's face as he was trying to find out if he could even trust any of the words spoken by the shadow hovering above him. Then he felt next violent tremor following the increasing pressure of fingers penetrating him. He gasped out loud.

"Shh." Hannibal's lips touched his temple, then his damp hairline. The kindness didn't fit, it made him sick in his stomach, nauseous with all those unfamiliar tones and frequencies he had never got used to.

Hannibal looked down on Will's face, trying to read any signs of pain. Then he withdrew his fingers and pressed them to his lips, sucking and wetting them with his own saliva. When the younger man made a face, Hannibal smiled completely unabashed. The touch of slick fingers returned to Will's asshole, ready to intrude again. Will only winced slightly when he sensed sharp pain of being stretched widely with three fingers inside of him.

"H-hurts." A small wounded cry left his lips. He'd never done something like this, he would've never even thought of it before. It was piercing, sharp and overwhelming kind of stinging. He started writhing underneath Hannibal's heavy frame, pressing constricted hands against the material of the tie. "U-untie me!" Will yelled helplessly with a broken sound of panic clattering. "Hannibal, I'm fucking serious! C-can't do it like this..."

Hannibal furrowed his brows at the sound, still moving his fingers a little. His heart almost stopped beating when he heard a high-pitched cry and a second after that he saw tears dripping down Will's overheated face. He hesitated, then removed his fingers all together.

Will's sobbing grew louder, yet he still held gaze on Hannibal's eyes. The older man felt an uneasy sting of pain in his chest at the sight of it.
"Will." The younger man only swallowed thickly.

"Untie me, I said."

Hannibal nodded his head lightly, moving hands towards the tie firmly binding the other man's wrists; he untangled the knot he'd made and let go of Will's wrists in one movement to free him. Will's breath sped up, his eyelashes fluttering rapidly. Hannibal made a move to step away from him, leaving him a room to calm himself, but the second he wanted to back away, he felt a sharp tug on his arm, bruising with desperation.

"I didn't say you were supposed to let go." Rough voice pierced through panting.

Hannibal's eyes lit up instantly.

"D-don't you dare to f-fucking leave me here alone." A shallow sobbing echoed through Hannibal's head, merciless. "Not in a state like this. Not when I ache all over. I... don't want to feel hollow again after you let go of me just out of spite. To p-punish me." He pointed out breathlessly.

"Will, I would never..." The older man began to speak calmly, he was interrupted yet again.

"Ravaged and undone. It's not the lesson I want to be learned," he finished bitterly, gazing upon Hannibal's face.

"Will." A constantly repeated prayer escaped Hannibal's mouth, it trembled a bit when he spoke. He didn't hesitate much more, just wrapped his hands around Will's waist, pulling him firmly to his chest. He felt fervent hands closing around his neck, hugging him.

"Take me, Hannibal." Take whatever you want. A sore, needy sound filled the older man's ears with rawness. His insides clenched with need. He growled in a low voice, pressing nails into Will's bare shoulder blades. He couldn't hold himself back any longer.

He made Will lie down on the floor again, adding a light pressure with his palm to the younger man's chest. He looked at him considerably, done talking.

He didn't have anything to thoroughly prepare Will's tensed body for what was to come. No lubrication, no protection, no patience left.

He pressed his achingly hard erection against Will's only partly outstretched hole and immediately detected a tight ball of hotness; ignoring Will's clenched teeth and sharp breath, he pushed his hips forward with such a force it made Hannibal let out a flaming groan when met with cramped space of Will's insides, deeply hidden flesh narrowing around his thick cock.

He looked over and saw Will's face wincing and twitching in visible pain, tremor taking over his body, but his eyes were shut closed, mouth tightened, crossed in a thin line. He didn't let out a single sound, just inhaled rapidly with each second passing by.

Hannibal stopped moving when he was in, simply trying to match his lover's panting. He didn't dare to push himself further, almost feeling the ache engraved on Will's face.

It was going to be tough without a lube, still it was too late to turn back now. Will's hands didn't let go of his neck even for a second, the grip only tightened, fingers clutching at the naked skin.

He was not letting him go.

Hannibal sighed heavily, leaning against the floor with one hand and pressing the other one at the
younger man's hip, holding strongly. Then he pushed himself with a quick movement, his constricted cock pulsing with blood and sweet pleasure. The pleasure was agonizing. He moaned silently, biting down his lower lip.

"Ahh!" Will's strained voice gave in eventually, filling the space with pitiful whines, shivering taking a hold of him.

**Too intense, too insane. What am I even doing, letting him take me like this,** Will thought to himself, overwhelmed, barely able to think at all.

It felt like being stabbed, with no room to escape the knot of intensified work of neurons. Unnerving. Crucifying.

He cursed inwardly as he felt warmth closing around his erected member again. Hannibal's hand wrapped him tight, his unforgiving palm jerking him off, this time really fast to make up for the soreness he was inflicting. "Hannibal..." He heard himself whisper in pain and pleasure. The touch electric, full with purpose to take him to the edge and over. "H-hannibal...!" He yielded, out of breath, mouth hanging open.

Repeated sounds of his name had only made Hannibal more turned on. He bucked his hips forcefully on an impulse, pushing violently, his twitching penis now fully buried in Will's insides, his hand pressing stronger along his shaft to draw the younger man's pleasure to the surface.

A strangled cry muffled as Will tried to control himself again. The stinging pain was flaming, hot and making him numb; at the same time he felt himself loosen a bit and beats of pleasure entered his body.

**Relax.**

Will panted while still being palmed; he opened his eyes covered with mist now and looked up at Hannibal's sweating face. It sent fluttering needles down his lower stomach. He looked fierce, wild, unabashed. Then he felt thick cock pushing again and again into him, this time not stopping to wait for him to adjust to the sensation.

"How's the pain?" A hoarse voice inquired with a sense of underlying worry, but the arousal was far more familiar to his ears.

"Excruciating." Will hissed through the clenched teeth, then his features lightened with a faint smile. "Good."

"That's not... what I want you to f-feel." Hannibal answered in an adamant tone, his heavy panting tingling Will's cheek. The older man leaned in with his dry mouth near his throat and started kissing and sucking sensitive skin there. "You're forgetting that I'm a doctor after all." He smirked while kissing his quivering body.

Will scowled, not sure what the remark had meant, until he could feel it deeply; Hannibal's hips bucked with passion against his entrance, pulsing cock finally finding the sweet spot in tight and hot muscles wrapped around it. Hannibal was pushing into him furiously, hitting a sensitive gland without mercy.

"Oh G-god..." The brunet cried out pitifully, dizzy with a newfound sensation. His vision blurred, whiteness behind his eyelids. "W-what..." He moaned out loud, hearing his own shameless voice. The pain had transformed in one quick moment, then again and again... Until it was undistinguished with pleasure, mangled together in unbearable tension, Will's cock leaking a little bit already, thick
vein pulsing in Hannibal's hand.

He couldn't recall any other time he had ever felt this unravelled and filled with pure ecstasy. It was too much to even count when he had little of that since he hadn't had sex in ages and he couldn't find pleasure in masturbating as of lately. Maybe that's why it was too much to handle all of those new sensations now. He had never had sex with a man. He had never given himself to anyone in a way he was now sacrificing his vulnerability to the man lying on him and moving inside of him so fervently.

"Don't go. Please, stay, Will. Stay with me." A weak cracked voice interrupted his foggy thoughts, clouded with increasing pleasure. He gazed in Hannibal's murky eyes, now shining brightly. It looked like Hannibal had been touched by sacrum or a mighty god, waiting to be blessed by him. Will felt salt coming up to his eyes from pleasure and mere realization that he just saw pure admiration in the older man's eyes. He couldn't take it.

"I c-can't... I'm gonna-" Will sucked his breath in, choking on the pleasure when Hannibal cruelly fastened his moves, pounding into him with strong, short pushes, filling him all the way up.

_Fuck._

"Am I killing you, Will? Taking away your sanity?" A teasing voice inquired.

His whole face reddened even more, looking straight into Hannibal's face when he blurted out without thinking: "You're so f-fucking b-big."

Hannibal's pupils dilated, his throaty growl feral and threatening. Will's weak yelping almost taking him over the edge.

"You. Foolish. Reckless. Boy." A hiss came out with a following bite, marking Will's neck deeply. His cry was quickly stuffed with Hannibal's demanding mouth.

The kiss was anything but gentle, control lost, the final scratches of patience gone. The blonde man pulled out his throbbing dick and then engraved himself deeply inside Will's sore muscles again, aggressively hitting the younger man's knots of nerves in the neuralgic prostate over and over again until he had Will screaming and pleading.

"Pleaseletme-" A pitiful mumble escaped Will's lips through kisses. "Hannibal, please...!"

The older man looked down at him, lashes fluttering, stopping his punishing pounding for a second to catch a breath and let go of his penis completely, leaving him without pleasure. "What are you asking for, William?" He teased as he was brushing away Will's damp hair from his forehead, hand sticky with the younger man's precome.

The silence answered. Will's breathing heavy, eyes tracing the face in front of him, but a little unfocused.

"If you ask me to help you, I will. But I could go on like this forever. Never letting you go of my hands. Never letting you finish off," he whispered, the crudeness entwined with kindness.

Will's eyes widened in disbelief. "You wouldn't do it." He said shakily, tremor of fear crawling in.

"Ask me." Will heard hard voice, demanding sweet humiliation. Then he felt the cock penetrating him again for few seconds, squeezing his insides just right to feel the sweet dizziness. Will moaned hoarsely.
"Fuuuck. Please, I beg y-you-" He started, panting, then closed his eyes shut. Warm fingers returned to his painfully red erection, a teasing thumb pressing firmly at the tip of his cock's head to stop the cum from dripping freely. "D-don't, ahh!" He cried out, helpless against the torment.

"I need you to say the whole sentence, Will. Loud and clear, with eyes open." He heard next demand.

It was truly humiliating to be at Hannibal's mercy. And arousing all the same. Will hissed in pain when violently squeezed by his balls, not expecting the tight pressure.

Damn, Will thought, he would really deny me the release, if I didn't beg.

Panting loudly, he slowly opened his weary eyes, damp lashes fluttering rapidly. His face and chest warmed at the sight of Hannibal's apparent amusement.

"P-please... I beg you, Hannibal. Please, l-let me come..." He pleaded feebly, voice breaking, his visibly shaking hands clutching at Hannibal's firm shoulders. "I n-need to come, so plea-" A violent sobbing interrupted his begging, tears flooding his blue eyes for the third time this night.

It'd been all it took to enter the gates of heaven.

The older man let go of his balls, then caressed gently; he buried himself again in his tight ass, trying to break the other man with tight pressure. Will whimpered, shook, as he felt being taken from the cold ground into Hannibal's strong embrace. His limbs were weak now, but he held onto the other man as firmly as he possibly could, like he was holding onto the life itself.

He yelped, filled with sudden shudder; he found himself on the top of Hannibal, placed in his lap, between his wiry thighs with Hannibal's heavy, twitching cock beneath him. In a snap he was roughly pushed by firm arms to take his whole length and to tuck it tightly with his aching insides. "Hann!" He screamed out, blinded by the immense amount of pain and pleasure all at once. It felt completely different to be in such position.

"Will," Hannibal hissed out shakily as he wrapped his hands all around Will's small frame to keep him close to his burning skin. "You feel so marvellously good... I could melt into your flesh." He panted, kissing his shoulder with awaken emotion.

Will cried out miserably with Hannibal's name on his lips, tucking his shivering legs around Hannibal's hips. He pulled up and down Hannibal's swollen member, letting out a sharp, breathless sound. He was really close, he could feel the tensing of his limbs, tinges at the back of his head, fluttering in his stomach, tightness in the crotch. He started rutting and slamming his cheeks brutally fast on Hannibal's meaty cock, blissful throbbing crushing him with a sudden wave of heat and fire. Hannibal helped to ease his ache, rubbing his shaft keenly.

He tilted his head, eyeing Will, who was completely lost in pleasure, through his narrowed eyes and a shadow of a smile tugged at his thirsty lips.

This is all I've ever wanted for you, Will. For both of us.

"You belong to me, mylimasis." Hannibal gave away a guttural inhumane voice, his hands clenching on Will's arse; he slapped his left cheek harshly to trigger the sweetest of sounds.

"H-hann!" Will's prayer lost on his tongue when the arousing pain flickered and took over his body. The sensations had been killing him. When Hannibal pushed his hips ruthlessly forward once again, he felt his fists tightening and the twitching in his toes. "D-damn I l-love you-" A choking moan escaped his sore throat as his insides tightened around Hannibal's cock and his stomach clenched
violently; he came all over the other man's palm, his cum thick and sticky, a vivid proof of how much he'd needed this and how long it'd been since he had such an intense orgasm.

Dizzy, barely present in the moment, Will rested his sweaty temple against Hannibal's shoulder; he pressed swollen lips against naked skin, panting frantically. He kissed the shoulder weakly, wetting it with his saliva, then closed his eyes. Hands wrapped around the other man's solid frame, shaking hard.

Now more than ever he needed to feel the rocks at the shore, never crashed or damaged by the salty ocean, by the unknown muddy waters. He needed it so he wouldn't fade away with the next current of shapeless dark seen behind his eyelids.

Hannibal growled low in his chest, holding Will tightly through his orgasm, feeling how convulsive it was. The brunet's wrecked words, blurted out recklessly, echoed through the halls of Hannibal's mind. His heart was racing like a wild horse, pounding fast in his ribcage. A frustrated cry climbed out of his sore throat as he kept moving his hips, thrusting deeply into the sweet abyss of Will's dark carnal paradise, his wet hole being ravished and bruised with egoistic, savage pushes. He put his chin on the younger man's head, never breaking their embrace as he began to release himself in Will with a sharp shudder and a low groan caught in his throat. Coming violently, he looked dishevelled, his hair messed up, eyes misty, unseeing. "Will..." He breathed the blissful litany, washing him clean from all the dirt.

Will only murmured something incoherently, too unfocused and dazed out to register anything, although he felt how Hannibal's semen had filled him just seconds ago. A lazy thought had him caught up in one sentence repeating itself in his head through all the pleasant fog: *I have been marked again, I belong somewhere.*

When Hannibal was spent, he pulled his soft cock out of Will, instantly hearing the younger man's longing sigh, then muffled sob with Will's mouth pressed softly to his neck, hiding.

"Will. Are you all right?" He managed after a moment given to both of them just to calm down. Hannibal tried to pull the brunet away from his skin, yet he couldn't because of hands wrapped around him strenuously. "Will, did I... Did I hurt you?" He assumed, voice bitter, throat clenching as he swallowed a sudden bile.
Music: "Carnival Of Rust" by Poets Of The Fall (one of the few songs that I cannot listen to without thinking about Hannigram). Enjoy ;)

Do you breathe the name of your saviour in your hour of need,  
And taste the blame if the flavor should remind you of greed?  
Of implication, insinuation and ill will, 'til you cannot lie still,  
In all this turmoil, before red cape and foil come closing in for a kill

Come feed the rain  
'Cause I'm thirsty for your love dancing underneath the skies of lust

"Will. Are you all right?" Hannibal managed, trying to pull the brunet away from his skin, yet he couldn't, because of the hands wrapped around him strenuously. "Will, did I... Did I hurt you?" He assumed, voice bitter, throat clenching as he swallowed a sudden bile.

Will my ravenous desire eventually be the end of him?

The silent sobbing had transformed into earsplitting violence. Next thing he knew Will was jolting all over, his body caught in tremendous tremor.

"Will!" A forceful hand pulled the younger man by his sweaty, curly hair to draw a solid reaction. Hannibal stared at Will's blank expression. His gaze was empty, absent to touches. His whole face flushed with redness and teary. "Listen to me! Are you listening?"

What have I done, Hannibal thought inwardly. When he was about to either kiss or slap Will's face to make him snap out of this, whatever it was, he heard a weak response.

"I'm okay," Will said vaguely. His eyes fell upon Hannibal's lips and he kissed them gently in a single movement, the feeble reassurance. "I've got lost somewhere between rushed heartbeats and frozen blood..."

Hannibal swallowed hard. "Where have you been after you had departed and distanced yourself from..." Me, he almost said out loud, the bitterness waiting on his tongue. "...This moment?"

"In a house of split memories where every wall's been painted with anticipation of loss..." Will whispered, bewildered at his own statement, like he didn't think it through. Like the taste of those words didn't belong to his tongue and something else was speaking through him. Within him.

Hannibal locked eyes with Will who was barely holding up from bursting into tears again. An unpleasant shiver ran down his spine at the very sight of it.
"You have no idea how much-" Will trailed off with a crack in his voice, his mouth winced a bit. "How much it pains me to stay awake when I am... this intimate with you."

"If I did something..." Hannibal began to speak with a sense of false calmness, but couldn't finish the sentence. The glassy waterfall, now frozen on his lover's cheeks, forced him to stop. Such a high price to pay if he continued.

"You did. You'd knocked on my door and I'd let you in." Lips trembled, eyelashes fluttering violently. "What you did to me..."

What you did to me is in my head.

"...Is what's been making me lose myself, and now even more than before." Will eyed Hannibal's hurt expression, then he smiled weakly. "I'm not saying that to wrong you."

"Are you?" A stifled sound entered the space between them.

"Hannibal." Will lifted his hand and traced fingers across the other man's clenched jaw. Shapeless thoughts ascended into broken chords of Will's mind. It felt like hungry insanity was trying to take him over. He tapped Hannibal's warm cheek with his nails, feeling how sharp his cheekbones truly were. With that simple gesture, he discovered how much he'd needed the solid reality of the obedient skin just under his touch. "I've forgiven you that influence. But somehow I find myself struggling to accept my own compassion. It's confusing how everything you've been taking away from me is nothing when compared with every little thing you've been giving me, and I resent myself for taking delight in it."

Hannibal tilted his head slightly, narrowing his eyes. "You regret what has just happened. In some way."

Will only looked back at him. He wished he could convey all the uneasiness and anxious contradictions rooted in the freakish mind of his. "I'm sorry, Hannibal."

You delight in wickedness and then you berate yourself for the delight.

"You don't have the proper appetite." Hannibal winced grudgingly. His eyes didn't leave the ones he had claimed long time ago. "It is hard for me to agree when your body tells a different story as it speaks of honesty with such a convincing narrative," he added bitingly.

"My body which you try to corrupt with forceful touches to bend and mould into shapes you want it to be. And now the last barrier of intimacy between us is gone and the line has been crossed." spiteful words came out, forming the whole sentences of the ugliest perspective. "My sexuality had been the only stability in the entire universe of screwed up things going on inside my head."

Will swallowed hard. He was well aware of how fragile he sounded. Well aware of the consequences, if he spilled his guts completely. If he confessed how addictive of a vision was the one with Hannibal's lingering touch on his bare flesh. Will had washed away all of that naive sentiment which would made a man hopeful, then shattered into a chaotic shape with no identity to hold onto. Hannibal could probably smell how afraid he felt right now, but Will was sure the other man hadn't come to fully realise what was the root of his fear.

He wasn't ready to be a broken teacup again - disposed on the cold surface of unforgiving earth and smashed without the second thought. "I don't wish to become a fine piece of art laid out in front of your collected form so you can indulge in the patron's pleasure of watching over my malleable beauty that only you're allowed to carve according to your will." A bleak, dismal whisper escaped
the younger man's lips.

"Where's forgiveness in your mouth now?" Hannibal replied quietly, his head lowering down a bit submissively. It reminded Will of his dogs, how they'd used to look apologetic with their meek stares and docile behaviour when they'd done something bad. With Hannibal, it seemed unnatural, not fitting. It caused Will a quick nagging sting somewhere in his chest. He wasn't enjoying the sight.

"I had let you do it to me. I am as much at fault as you are. It's myself that I can't forgive." Will ended the discussion with sharpness clinging to his tone, ready to attack at any moment. "I need to clear my head. Don't look for me." He said in a more impassive tone. He tried but was not able to hide all the vulnerability he was feeling when he looked upon Hannibal's saddened posture.

Hannibal gave him that distrustful look and Will only stepped back in response, getting on his feet. He felt cold and naked. It wasn't comfortable to be stripped of everything all at once. His body consummated and worn out, his soul gnawing, unravelled mess, his heart icy since the entrance to it had been opened wide for the first time in his life. Leaving him cold and numb in his chest. Leaving him fenceless. He needed to get out, to take a breath without a familiar smoky smell around him. Inside of him.

"I'll be back." He'd made the promise eventually before he took his clothes off the floor and left the room. He felt the trailing gaze following each step he took but he didn't turn back.

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Hannibal clenched his teeth tight, stroking his jaw when left alone. He wouldn't go after him, he promised to himself. Will needed time, he thought despite the rage and fury rising in his chest.

*Haven't I waited for you long enough? Will I ever be rewarded for the patience?*

He sighed, then made himself move from the cold floor. Nothing was warm anymore, his naked body filled with an unknown chill.

**Foreshadowing of rejection.**

The blonde man took all of his crinkled clothes and left the room to clear his mind. He needed his vision to be pure, filled with precision he had always been known for. He calmed his nerves with several long breathes, and came back to the main living room where the first act of spectacle had been played out. He recalled in his imagination how magnificent Will had looked, how charming his malicious smile had been, how his moves had betrayed his almost frenzied, underlying emotion. He had been sparkling with light and power over life and death itself.

Jealousy and possessiveness had been driving him all along and he hadn't even been fully aware of it.

Hannibal smiled faintly, looking at Will's creation. Bedelia was lying on the floor, still, like an ancient goddess. He felt like drawing something, he would want to engrave the mental picture on paper with sharp lines of a pencil. It was a scene to remember after all.

Will's first passionate, independent murder, his own deliberate creation evolving from the darks of his mind and soul alike. The crowning of what had elapsed and had to be left behind. Also the initiation. Of new ways of living. The perfect composition. All that was left for Hannibal was to believe in Will and in his ability to accept their new reality of stepping into each other's light.

Then the old melody sang in his ears and echoed through the walls of his brain. One of the things with which he'd maimed Will when he'd corrupted his senses and set his brain on fire. He wasn't sure
now if Will had ever got to recall those chanting spells from the blurry memories of that time but he hoped that he had.

*We see potential in our beloved. Through the love, we allow our beloved to see their potential.
Expressing that love, our beloved's potential comes true.*

***

Will came back hours later. It'd been already night when he was walking across the hallway, trying to hold himself upright. He dragged his feet up to the first floor and stumbled upon Hannibal, sketching on a sofa. He looked around, Bedelia's body gone from his sight, nowhere to be seen. Like she had never entered this space at all, like it all had been nothing but a fuzzy dream.

"Hello," he announced himself but heard no response. "I know it's late. I took a long way home." He stuttered, the bitterness of alcohol clear and unpleasant on his tongue.

"You did, indeed." A small voice admitted with accusation. "You're drunk, Will."

"I'm sorry." A heavy sigh echoed.

"Not your first sorry tonight." Hannibal lifted his gaze eventually to consider the walking mess that was walking toward him with noticeable uncertainty of steps. The older man narrowed his eyes, darkening a bit at the sight, then returned to task at hand.

"B-but I really am. And I'm not that drunk, Doctor Lecter." Will moved cautiously towards the sofa, knowing that the dizziness could lead him into disgrace with one careless movement. "Did you miss me?"

The older man regarded him carefully, his upper lip dangerously rising up a bit. "And what do you think?" He replied absently, looking somewhere beyond Will's eyes.

"You did." The younger man fell a little forward, ending on Hannibal's lap. He burst into laughing when the other man grimaced visibly, being impelled to stop drawing his sketch and to put the paper away.

"Did I?" Hannibal's posture stiffened when Will wrapped his drunken arms around him. Strong and pure scent of vodka ran across Hannibal's smell receptors. He grunted, then looked at the brunet with evident disapproval.

Rude.

"When I left, I couldn't get out the vivid pictures out of my head, you know." Will's husky voice sent warm air near Hannibal's ear. "You. Moving against me, inside me. God, you were so violent..." A snarl escaped the older man's throat at that. "It thrilled every bone in my body to be taken like t-that." He choked on the last word when a brutal grip squeezed his windpipe.

"Will." Hannibal warned in a low voice, but Will ignored it completely, trying to rub himself against Hannibal's pelvis. He moaned frustrated, not having the best position to make enough friction. He still tried rutting, despite strong hands tightening around his neck. He stopped breathing as he felt Hannibal strangling him, sensation of suffocation giving him mild erection already. His belly clenched with need. "Stop it right now, William. You are too drunk to be aware of what you're trying to attempt here."

His pressing hands gone, leaving Will cold and empty without the solid pressure. The returned ability to breathe freely felt needless somehow. It ruined the picture of killing beauty. "My attempt is to
seduce you. I'm well aware of my actions."

"You're not going to succeed so better stop before I find another way to make you unconscious in a split second." Low irritated hissing answered. Will nearly stopped moving his hips when he saw Hannibal's darkened features. The patience was wearing thin, the elegance gone, the person suit coming off with each second.

Will felt reckless, beyond the point of no return. His actions not meant to taste the waters, however deep and muddy they truly could be, but put on the leash by the craving grown into his whole being. He craved the danger, the anticipation, the unpredictability of each moment which he would be spending with the man in front of him. The constant thrill of their dynamics had made his existence acknowledged and confirmed. Taken and accepted.

**Embraced.**

Will smirked, the little twinge of fear and newfound hunger dancing inside his stomach. Then he ignored Hannibal's angry glare altogether. "I can still feel you. Like a shadow lurking underneath." He blurted out hazily and Hannibal was just about to take him on his hands and leave in the bedroom to rest and sober up when he heard a hot whisper in his ear: "Your marking. Thick, sticky and still in. I didn't shower just to hold onto your scent, Hann-" Will didn't get to finish whatever crude information he was desperate to let out so carelessly.

"Kvailas! You foolish boy." A sharp scolding tone with feral intentions. Will laughed when Hannibal yanked his hair away, pulling hurtfully until he heard his little cry. With tightened stomach and heat sent to his aching groin, Hannibal lowered himself to sniff Will's neck and chest, then he bit punishing teeth into soft skin to make the other regret his behaviour. He'd sucked on it till it became red, feeling Will's shuddering frame beneath his rough touch.

"Yesss," Will moaned, shameless. His eyes were looking at the ceiling, lost in pleasure, absent now, his muscles tensed with neck exposed in surrender. Bared flesh, a sweet sacrifice.

Hannibal bit down again, familiar intoxicating taste of crimson in his mouth. He groaned as the younger man began to rub his clothed crotch against Hannibal's swollen erection. "No... Will." He denied harshly, common sense coming back to him from the thin veil of pleasure.

"P-please, I need you, Hannibal... Feed me." Will leaned his damp forehead against Hannibal's, heavy panting the only clear sound after those deafening words spoken almost mockingly, yet still hitting the right chords within the older man's resistance. It'd been aimed to break him apart.

"You left our house. You felt confused because of this. Don't provoke me and stop it or I will. We are not going to have sex when you are on the verge of fainting. I may be many things, but I won't take advantage of you in such a state." A strong, even voice echoed through the walls around them. Hannibal was proud of his calm posture, despite the heady excitement arisen in his body.

Will sighed heavily and finally gave up, letting out a quiet cry out of pure frustration. He stilled his hips and simply snuggled into Hannibal's red sweater. Then closed his weary eyes. Steady heartbeat heard underneath lulling him to rest.

Hannibal put one hand on his shoulder, fingers tapping gently to show his never faltering presence. *You're not alone in that dark. I'm standing right beside you.*

They had spent almost half an hour in the position. With soft embrace, hushed breathing, no words.
It was soothing.

"It's all too much, I behave like a mad dog," Will spoke eventually in a tone of self-contempt. Hannibal tilted his head swiftly to look at him, the brunet's face buried in his neck still. "I haven't been intimate with anyone for a long time and now of all the people it must've been you," he confessed in a teary voice, then swallowed hard to bury the inconvenient emotion. "Nobody had ever touched me the way you were touching me tonight."

Hannibal embraced him with both hands on his back and gave a little reassuring massage to his shoulder blades. He briefly thought of Will's past and the image of his wife, Molly, flashed inside his skull. A twisted kind of possessiveness made him smirk inwardly in the most vicious way. The simple knowledge, that his beloved's relationship had been full of empty spaces of loneliness and it'd been ruined with Will's more or less conscious longing for something which no woman or man on earth could possibly give, was everything at the moment. It brought Hannibal a pinch of satisfaction. It was comforting to know that only his touch made Will unravel completely. He didn't dare to show it on the outside, though, and he didn't try to interrupt the younger man's confession.

"I'd been lonely before you came into my life and turned it into a whole new dimension of chaos. I... Today, with you, it was the first time in months when I had any release," Will whispered breathlessly, hot wave coming up to his cheeks. It was embarrassing. He didn't have any idea why he was telling it all with such honesty. He blamed the alcohol running through his veins. "It's one of the reasons why I reacted like I did tonight. I'm sorry, Hannibal. Being like this with you is too intense for me to handle." He stuttered again.

Hannibal brushed Will's hair with tenderness. His look softened, eyes misty. "I didn't know." He said, voice strained. "You had been truly overwhelmed by all of this. You'd been in distress and I hadn't come to realise that in time. Instead, I've imposed myself on you. I have lost control led by my selfish desire to make you mine and I'm truly sorry for how that made you feel in the end, William."

A soft palm caressed Will's neck, deep, underlying affection lingering between touches, leaking through the older man's fingers.

"It's not your fault. I've wanted this," Will answered quietly. "I also couldn't help my desire. Sadly, it doesn't change the fact that being constantly on the receiving side is what got me conflicted in the first place." He let the words sink in, then lifted his head, gaze piercing through. "I don't feel equal with you when I'm the only one prone to be vulnerable with my reactions. And tell me, hadn't I always been like this?"

Submissive, Will almost let himself say, but bit his tongue.

Hannibal scowled. "It is anything but true, Will. You haven't been the only one... revealing yourself." His voice quiet, shy, saying much more than words spoken.

Will smiled faintly. "We are zero sum game then?"

Hannibal froze.

"When we were... When I was... At the end..." Will tried to form a coherent sentence, eyes fluttering. He sighed, not finding a good way to bring it up. "I was honest when I said it. I need you to know."

Hannibal's eyes lit up with a spark of red fire at the memory of Will's heedless confession; a hot wave ending its way down the hollow space in his chest where his heart should have been. He swallowed hard with emotion hidden behind his glassy eyes, yet unblinking. "You were?"

Will sensed hope in that weak, broken tone and couldn't hide the little smile which tugged to his lips
instantly. "Yes." His eyes flickered with light, blue ocean attacking Hannibal and pulling into deep waters of bliss. "And it still says so little about what it truly means. Just give me a bit more time, Hannibal. Wait to see me stand beside you."

The other man's gasp was the last noise Will heard. Then he passed out.

***

With an unclear sensation of dryness and overheating, Will woke up, lazily rubbing his eyes. At first he was attacked with the sunlight piercing through the window, then with the warm touch of hands, tightly clutched all around his waist. He didn't dare to look over, it hurt to look at all. He let out a small sigh and closed his eyes. The splitting headache welcomed him when he moved his head just slightly to ease the muscle soreness.

He murmured quiet curses under his nose. He hadn't had a hangover in a long time. He'd almost forgotten the sour taste of it. Will wanted to sleep through the worst part of it, till the evening at least when the beaming light wouldn't get in a way, but it wasn't an option. He felt dirty and achy. Thirsty. He opened his eyes after few restless minutes and lifted his hand to brush away the tousled curls. He needed to take a shower.

Eventually he turned his head slightly to look over at the man who was sleeping on the right side. Hannibal looked peaceful and unarmed with his hair a little messy, covering his closed eyes. Will took in the sight. He admired how composed his face looked from this close, even when asleep. Will couldn't say that about himself. He usually woke up sweaty and ruffled; not able to maintain control over the agonizing pictures, unfolded behind his eyelids, tormenting him in all sorts of dreamlands. He often found himself awaken in the middle of the night with muted screams in his mouth and breath sped up violently.

He is different from me. A simple thought entered Will's fuzzy mind. He had known it to begin with, yet until now he hadn't been really reflecting on that obvious statement. Through the years, he'd been much more committed to giving recognition to their similarities, and ultimately, that's also the way Hannibal had wanted him to think.

We're just alike. You're as alone as I am and we're both alone without each other.

Will bit his lower lip not to make a sound when he lifted his fingers and gently stroked Hannibal's cheek. It was pleasantly warm. Then he gazed upon the man's sharply curved lips and swallowed.

You're unique, Will.

When he saw a little twitching, and a small, muffled noise came from the other man, he quickly backed away. Without the second thought, Will disentangled himself from the strong arms put around him and somehow he managed to stand up on his feet, a little bit clumsily though.

If he was truly honest with himself, he wanted to stay. The warmth was all he needed. But somehow he couldn't get away from the little noises, piercing in the back of his head. Telling him that he was not ready to deal with everything that had happened. He was not ready for the conversation.

He escaped from the potential confrontation and went to the bathroom, teetering a bit. He took off his clothes carefully, slow moves keeping him from falling to the ground. When he was done, he drank water straight from the sink, then sighed and stepped into the shower. Water helped Will's fried nerves and sore muscles just as he'd thought it would. It was blissful and purifying in a way, even if it couldn't wash him clean of all the sentiment and mental struggle he felt coming. Will lost the train of thoughts while washing his body, lazy hand movements were the real proof of his exhaustion, still
not conquered. He didn't even register the moment his mind betrayed him by immersing in still vivid memories.

*Who said I am after less harming alternative with you? Maybe I just want your living taste under my tongue first...*

He heard the dark coloured voice surrounding him in the narrow space of a shower cubicle. His heart started to beat faster.

*Is this how you think of me, Will?*

The shiver ran through his naked body. The wild, flashing pendulum greeted him, first time after so many months - endless moments of stagnation. He felt how high the temperature of the water was, hitting his flesh hard, unforgiving, but it didn't matter.

*Am I killing you, Will? Taking away you sanity?*

Will whimpered pitifully, hearing the words loudly inside his skull. He clenched his teeth tight, closed his tired eyes and instinctively palmed his hardening penis with shaky fingers.

*Ask me.*

"Hannibal..." Will heard himself whisper breathlessly, the excitement relived again. He couldn't focus on the water dripping down his spine or his trembling legs, or the suffocating hotness coming up his chest, neck, face... His eyes already unseeing. Lost in pleasure when he gripped himself firmly, thrusting his cock into his hand ferociously. The stimulation still not enough to match the memorised thrill. Desperation written all over his bended posture, leaning against the glassy wall. He could barely hold himself upright, but he didn't stop jerking off. He tried to suppress the little moans by biting his lips. It didn't work out, unfortunately.

*I need you to say the whole sentence, Will...*

*You belong to me.*

Will's mind fought against the transformation, but it couldn't be helped. He felt his own lips whispering the last words, his voice lowered a bit to match the tension contained in them. The sensations were sharp, focused, never faltering. He could see himself lying on the floor, compliant and subordinated under the rough touch of another, pounding deep into his insides.

Will's vision caused him to curse and yelp internally. He felt a wild excitement, strong radiation coming off Hannibal's skin. For the moment he borrowed the heat, and he borrowed the itching skin. Will's imagination let him see it clearly. Feel it all. The predatory lust behind the fervent intentions. He could sense his hips thrusting in the fragile, shivering frame without mercy and it felt real enough to make his penis throb, anticipating the upcoming orgasm.

The muffled cry escaped Will's mouth when he came, imprisoned within the moment of tight arousal fulfilling itself shamelessly.

Will's knees gave in eventually. The images crumbled, the walls around him bleak, turning white. His legs hit the tiles, so he embraced himself with shaking arms, trying to catch a breath.

*What is this even,* he thought annoyed at what he just did. Out of nowhere, the grim shade of the dark smoke materialized. The shape of it inconsistent and changing rapidly. Will opened his mouth, bewildered, and the second he did that, he felt the dense fog coming in through his mouth and nostrils. It filled him all the way up to the lungs and it tasted like death and arousal entwined in the
perfect proportion. The smoke was spreading through his whole body, running down with hot blood in his veins and arteries. It needed to get in everywhere. Careful not to leave a single part of his ragged body uninfected.

Will knew the disease would kill him in the end. It didn't stop the electric spark in his guts, taking over his body. It also didn't change the quickened heartbeat or the sweet, aching pain in his chest when he gently lifted his hand and put fingers on the left side of his ribcage, rubbing the spot solemnly. Then he moved them slowly to his neck, pressing against the rapidly pulsing vein. One, two, three... six...

"Your name is Will Graham. It's almost noon. You're currently in Norway, on the run with the most uncanny and handsome serial killer the world has ever seen..." His confident, calming voice floated away with the spilling water, now turning cold. It was cleansing his hollow places, the fractured pieces, and then mending, putting it back together again. He wasn't drifting apart or becoming liquid and helpless this time around. He closed his fluttering eyes.

"And you're alive." A soft whisper escaped his lips. Will smiled to himself.
It was a rainy day as Will found out when he eventually got out of the shower. Hannibal had already been gone, warmth of the skin lost when the younger man touched the sheets. He sighed lightly, looking around the room. His eyes caught a silver tray on a bedside table. There was breakfast. Fresh bread, a few slices of ham, eggs, a glass of sparkling water and a hot cup of coffee which smelled hauntingly. It was all he could wish for at the moment.

Will dragged his sluggish feet towards the small table and his lips curved in a brief smile. It was quite impressive that Hannibal had made it all in just several minutes before he left. It was as if he knew precisely what Will would need.

He needed clarity.

Having drunk the coffee and the water, Will felt a bit more energetic. His brain wrestled to get a complete control over the aching muscles and the headache. The soreness didn't leave, though. That pain was a sole reminder of what had happened. The alcohol, the talk, the angst, the aggression, the violence. Intimacy.

Will closed his eyes for a minute and lay down to consider what the recent events actually had made him feel. And what they could make him become.

A lover?

Will was aware of the consequences. He sighed, annoyed, when he felt the hot wave somewhere deep in his chest, then a light contraction in his guts. A pleasant one.

His world had been narrowed to the head of a pin. To the one fearful emotion; one question which he had never been truly able to answer with coherent words and vision fully clear.

*But do you ache for him?*
Will couldn’t get any more sleep when there were so many thoughts running through his head. He’d bitten his lips to the point where they became swollen and numb. There was no rest for the wicked after all.

He stood up, got rid of a towel he was covered with and then looked for some clothes in his wardrobe. He needed to be dressed, the sensation of a stiff material against his skin unnatural and uncomfortable, but at least giving him some sort of a cover. A concealer for the nakedness of a different kind.

Will was about to take the least fancy clothes he had, including a flannel shirt and blue shabby jeans, but then it clicked in his mind that Hannibal had planned for them to go out somewhere today. He’d been rather mysterious about it, telling Will it was a surprise. Will didn't like surprises but said nothing, silently agreeing to the idea. How could he even start rejecting Hannibal's offer if his eyes were glowing with the most vibrant light when he asked him?

Thus now, facing the big fashion dilemma, he felt lost again. He didn't enjoy picking and buying fancy outfits. It served to be the expensive facade with which one could hide all the primitive, lying in their pockets. He enjoyed immensely, however, how Hannibal was looking at him when he was wearing them. It caused his heart to flutter ever so slightly as if invisible wings came down to sit on his ribcage.

In the end, he chose a white dress shirt, a dark blue vest to draw attention to the contrast and black dress pants with a leather belt. Shoes were black as well, elegant and simple.

Will had once heard that shoes could tell a whole story of a man. Where he’d been and come from or where he was heading. The complexity of past and future tenses questioned with a piece of material on a man's feet. Will had doubts. His life story wasn’t elegant, it was also the furthest from being simple. That's why he thought it was all a theatrical act of pretending. Normally he would be wearing his old comfortable boots. Muddy and heavy. That sounded more like his whole existence in the nutshell.

Will left the cumbersome thoughts lingering onto him to spread a dose of self-hatred and pity. He looked in the mirror and combed his tousled hair with fingers. It was still wet from the shower but, all in all, he had to admit. He looked good. Handsome even. The scar on his cheek not vulgar anymore, softer to the touch when he pressed his finger to it.

He heard a mumbling voice, coming from behind the veil of silence:

> You have survived being swallowed by the Beast itself. You’ve got to know the bittersweet taste of forgiveness. You’ve been set free to see the man standing behind the veneer. You’ve been mesmerised and you’ve fallen into the bliss of the unknown. You are his equal now.

> Return the favour. Swallow the Beast whole. Let the man stand by your side.

***

The clock said 4 pm. The brunet took one of the pills from a small package. He didn't carry the painkillers in his pocket anymore which he considered a success. Today was an exceptional case.

Will had already taken his meds, and as the healthy addition to that, he had also drunk one glass of whisky, before the quiet footsteps began to grow louder, then stopped behind him. "I didn't hear you,” he simply said.

"I didn't make much noise. Didn't want to interrupt." A quiet melody answered. Will slowly turned
around to see Hannibal standing still, composed, with groceries in a paper bag.

"Did you?" Will tilted his head a bit, now leaning his back against the kitchen counter with elbows pressed on it to make himself more comfortable. Hannibal regarded Will with an unreadable expression. His gaze lingered over the younger man's appearance.

"Navy blue is certainly your colour. It looks on you like the late spring sky before night catches it and clouds it with darkness. And white brings out the light in your eyes perfectly." Hannibal hesitated a little, then decided to take one step forward towards the man before him. "Will... You look stunning today." His husky voice betrayed the profound contentment.

The younger man's shoulders trembled slightly at the sound. He looked Hannibal straight in the eyes, despite the sudden distraction of warmth spilling all over his body. "Well, I tried my best..." To please you, he almost blurted out.

"I see." The older man smiled, eyes lightened up. It was such a rare sight to witness that it took Will's breath away. He squinted his eyes, thinking about the proper way to start the conversation. The other man waited, no words between his lips. He put the bag away, graceful as always, his eyes still on Will's face while doing so.

The air became heavier, the tension thicker. Will sucked it in, not able to say anything sophisticated. Instead he closed the space between them, pulling Hannibal forward by his grey silky tie. Without giving it a thought, he kissed him, roughly at first, to ease the unbearable ache under his skin; the longing and the awkwardness.

As Will indulged himself more in now gentle and sloppy caresses, lips burning and needy, he heard Hannibal's soft moan. Barely noticeable. Then the strong hands embraced his back and Will could swear he felt them shaking a bit.

"Will." A tender murmur slid between the touches of lips entwined in a sweet bliss. The younger man lifted his gaze to meet Hannibal's eyes, the darkest mystery. They held each other's light and never stopped kissing. Will's hasty brushes against Hannibal's mouth were full of curiosity and tenderness. He had never kissed anyone that way before.

Few seconds later Hannibal broke the kiss and simply leaned his forehead against Will's shoulder, his lips numb and swollen from feverish touches. Before the brunet could react, Hannibal had already pressed his body against him, hugging as tightly as it was possible.

Will didn't dare to move, only exhaled the air violently, trying to stay upright and not give in to the weakness in his knees.

"Hannibal?"

"Yes?" A faint whisper answered, although not right away. Hannibal shut his eyes closed as his lips ended on Will's shoulder, kissing it softly.

"Are we... insane enough to be doing this?"

Hannibal searched for a piece of naked skin to sniff and taste. He kissed Will's neck in response.

Will moaned quietly, breath speeding up. He let himself be treasured with delightfully tiny deaths every time the mouth brushed against his sensitive spots. He gasped when a sudden shiver came along with the tongue in his earlobe.

"Are we insane enough to try to stop the storm when it's meant to strike our bones and never leave
our souls?" A whisper, a promise. Hannibal lifted his head and Will looked at him. His gaze was intense, soaked in desire. Will found himself overpowered with the intimacy once again. Still it was such a complete experience, terrifying and terrific at the same time.

"I thought that this storm would take me away from myself and I would never find the peace within the quiet of the stream. Since you... You'd taken it from me." Will's eyes became foggy when he spilled the words all over. "But now, more than ever, I find that the intimacy between us is the only thing keeping me at bay. It's made me whole again. I'd simply mistaken the emotion held for so long."

Hannibal's lips trembled noticeably. Will's eyes caught the motion. The vulnerability of that little expression made Will think of every way in which he could abuse that pretty mouth. It was tempting and he barely held back.

"And what was the mistake?" Hannibal asked simply, leaving out the refinement of speech.

Will smiled. "I was more than sure it was merely the destructive chaos of potential shadows of the future, never the reality of being. So I thought that I would get lost in never-ending and never happening prospects of happiness which I didn't deserve. And I defended myself against the charm of it because I didn't wish for myself to fall into the illusion..." Will let out carefully, watching the other man's reaction. Will knew in that moment that he had the power over life and death of whatever it was between them when he was using language in this special way. He could either build it up or reject it all along. But today, his words were meant to tantalise and seduce with the most exquisite truth.

Will put his steady hand on Hannibal's flushed cheek, and pressed himself roughly against the man. "Then recently I've realised it became real. And I needn't hide myself from this. I am here, with you, and it makes me stable. Within the confines of the freedom to choose what I want. A little caress against the flesh forced Hannibal's eyes to flutter, his brows furrowed a bit. His face looked like he couldn't handle much more of the words spoken so gently. "And I want you. You've become my serenity, Hannibal."

You brought me home and I didn't even know that I had one.

Will's mind flooded with every memory and proof of their closeness. Even the bloody ones brought the steady sensation, the calmness.

"I am everything but serenity, William. Your presence alone brings the worst impulses in me. I'm losing my temper, I'm losing control, and those things do not happen, not to me." A hot whisper hit the younger man's ear, dry lips pressed to it. "When you're near, I can't possibly shut down my need for you. All I am left with is this craving... To take you. Cage you. I've made your suffering the cold reality for the sake of my selfishness, and I would do it again and again."

Will felt how weak his legs were when a strong shiver came down his back at the words and their dark implication. Good, I want you out of control. "I've always felt safe with you. And when you'd been hurting me, it felt safe too," he blurted out hastily. "Your control is the steady pressure of cold calm I need on my shoulders to stay awake. So please, don't take it away."

Will sighed heavily and let his head fall in the crook of Hannibal's neck, immediately kissing the exposed flesh. He gasped into it, trying to calm down. He was vibrating with so many emotions and he could feel how Hannibal radiated with them as well. It was intense, yet uplifting. They were both holding on, trying to breathe their truth into one another. It was beautiful.

"As long as you have me, I won't," Hannibal said quietly.
"Is that a promise?" Will inquired breathlessly.

"Yes."
Love is clockworks,
And it's cold steel
Fingers too numb to feel
Squeeze the handle
Blow out the candle
Blindness

A little death
Without mourning

"Is that a promise?" Will inquired breathlessly.

"Yes."

Will moaned as he felt the promise being sealed with the harsh bite on his neck. Then with another one, and another... He lost count, the effect was all the same. It took less than a minute for Will to become a complete mess of trembling limbs, giving away pitiful, begging whimpers.

Hannibal stopped to look Will in the eyes, his mouth open and decorated with blood. "It doesn't have to involve this kind of intimacy. If it's too much for you, Will, I won't ever force my carnal, cavernous intentions upon you...

"Oh, the last resort."

Will scowled, then it hit him hard; the blurry memories of their last conversation returned to him, struck him like the lightning and caused his heart to ache in an unfamiliar way. "Yesterday I was just... overwhelmed."

"I do not wish to confuse you. You asked for time. Shouldn't I keep my word then?" Hannibal stepped back a little bit. Not enough to take the body warmth away, yet enough to make Will's heart beat faster in fear of being denied.

"I'll be more confused if you stop," Will answered in a low voice. Hannibal regarded him silently, the seconds seemed to stretch out like an unimaginable idea of infinity. Will waited, suspended in time, watching Hannibal's murky eyes.

"I would tend to all of your needs did you truly want me to. Although what you want and what you need may not be the same thing at the moment. I care deeply for your well-being, Will. I apologise if
my behaviour indicated anything else than that. Yesterday was-

Will's eyes sparked with pure fire. He didn't allow the other man to finish. "A mistake? Are you the one now to indulge in regret?"

Hannibal tilted his head a bit, and Will could swear that it looked like one of the curious facial expressions from their past when Hannibal was clinging to his professional facade. "No, it wasn't," he simply said, voice irritatingly placid. Only his eyes were glistening dangerously. "I have no regrets."

Will shook his head, then huffed in disbelief. "Are you... Are you trying to psychoanalyse me?" He raised his voice a bit, his eyes locked up with Hannibal's to search for the answer. "You want to put on your doctor suit once again and have a deep conversation about my mental state? Well, I think it's way beyond ethics since you're the other party involved here."

"Will." Hannibal gazed deeply in the brunet's eyes, and it bored holes inside him, heating him up, the fury sinking low in his chest. It was too compassionate. Felt like pity. Out of nowhere, his whole body was shaking but with utterly different reasons than he had wished for. It wasn't until now that he fully realised how much angst lived within the walls of his subconsciousness or stayed hidden in his flaming blood, now rushing fast through the veins.

"I don't want you to wear any kind of a person suit, Hannibal. I want you to be real." Will gritted his teeth, face wincing visibly. "Raw."

Within less than a second, Hannibal's hands were all over Will. The younger man closed his eyes shut, anticipating the predatory attack, the sharp consequence of his ugly tone and unpolished attitude. It didn't come, however, and soon Will gasped helplessly as he felt the tender kisses against his hairline. He tried to break away from the unexpected kindness. "Please, stop it." Hannibal whispered faintly, cuddling Will; his embrace soft and strong at once.

Will protested weakly, but eventually his limbs gave in and he only breathed sharply through his nose, returning the touch by putting his hands around Hannibal's waist. He had no choice but to submit and sink into the embrace.

"Let me explain what I've initially meant to say, Will." Hannibal sighed silently. "I don't take pleasure in denying you anything. I'm not going to reject you. Is this the thought running through your head? How miraculously wrong you are if it is."

The scolding tone made Will growl in a low voice. He cursed inwardly when Hannibal lifted the right hand and with soft tips caressed his lower back through the shirt. The calming pressure. "You are confused, don't run away from that statement. You said it yourself yesterday and you don't have to rush yourself to change anything. I will wait until you come to terms with chaotic thoughts harassing you. Like I've always waited for you. It may seem like I'm retreating to the comfortable position of a therapist, but I can assure you it is not true. I am not hiding behind the mask of psychiatry. I am here with you in this very moment, Will. Just as involved as you are. Feeling it all. Do you understand?"

Will stepped back, breaking the embrace. He nodded his head slightly, and Hannibal continued: "I'm glad." He smiled. "It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for me not to try to help the one I care about the most if I feel capable of doing so. I will not be sorry for my attempt, even if you read it as an impolite way of forced mental help. You may interpret it as you like. Since our history cruelly shows I've abused your trust many times and you are intimately familiar with my manipulative ways towards you, I would be truly surprised if you could put it all aside and be totally free of those lingering associations."
Will closed his eyes, the pain in his ribcage growing unbearable.

"I am not psychoanalysing you, Will. You asked seconds ago for my control over you in times you don't feel stable. I am merely offering that, nothing more." Hannibal lifted Will's chin with his fingers and kissed him briefly, not losing himself in the softness of skin. "This is me being raw with you. Since it appears you crave the violence more than anything, maybe you truly believe that's all I'm able to give. You even unconsciously try to provoke me so I would show you the worst of me. Yet I know it is the kindness that kills you the most. Thus, please, do consider the fact that I am going to use it against you as much as it pleases me, my dear."

"It's n-not fair..." Will hissed, trying to hold on, when his closed eyes were being kissed tenderly. He ached all over with insufferable want. "Not fair at all."

"And what did I tell you about the fairness last night?" Hannibal said with amusement attached to his voice. He smirked as he saw Will's whole face reddening, flashbacks coming back to life with the dizzying pace.

"I get it. We need to talk." Will sighed, changing the topic a bit, his voice resigned. He pressed his forehead against Hannibal's and let the silent communication of a simple touch take over.

"We do. When alcohol was speaking through you, you told me that you don't feel equal. What should I do to make you feel differently?" Hannibal spoke in a low voice, his tone indicated it was an honest plea. "I see you as my partner, my only true friend. The one and only person to ever see me and not reject me for what I am. I wouldn't wish for your companionship if I didn't consider you my equal, Will."

"I know." The younger man opened his eyes to look into the abyss of everything he held dear. The steady murky gaze, the only safe space in the world. "I'm just not known for building the healthiest relationships exactly, neither am I used to treating myself nicely. And I surely know nothing about finding myself in the middle of the romance."

Hannibal laughed. It made Will light-headed with indescribable emotion. "You're exquisite, Will. Do not forget that." A warm breath against his ear sent shivers down his spine. Hannibal kissed his face all over with gentleness Will had never experienced before. It was hard to stay passive and just take the gift.

"Tell me, does it bother you that much? Is this unbearable to withstand?" Hannibal inquired, not able to take Will's irritation seriously.

"It is fucking maddening." Will growled out loud, sharp teeth showing. He put his hand on Hannibal's neck and kissed the man, but this time he didn't stop at light touches. Will slipped his tongue in and forced Hannibal to indulge in the little dance between their wet muscles. Soon after that, they both started to moan quietly, unabashed and eager to explore each other's taste.

Will had never known that kind of passion which was engraved in skin and soul altogether, utterly invincible. Only now he could admit it to himself; he had never understood what love of such high frequency could mean, let alone of such intensity. He was aware now that he would kill to keep it.

With the knowledge of it came the sudden bravery. Without leaving Hannibal's lips, he managed to turn their positions so he was pressing himself against Hannibal's hard torso, pushing him firmly into the kitchen counter. His kisses transformed into bites but the other man didn't complain. Will was hungry and possessive, and Hannibal surrendered to his touch. He let Will bite his mouth, then trace his jawline with a wet tongue, marking and petting. Sensing the change in their dynamics, the older man let himself become compliant; his muscles free of any tension. A subtle depiction of obedience.
Will sniffed his neck, then his hair, letting out a husky breath. The noise he made after that reminded Hannibal of a feral animal, never caught to be stroked carelessly. It made his belly clench pleasingly, the tightness already building in his dress pants. "Will. We should-" A strangled voice echoed, but soon enough Hannibal was punished for speaking; his shirt being undressed hurriedly so the hasty, greedy mouth could eventually clasp around his bare skin. Will bit his shoulder hard, then sucked soft skin ponderously to make up for it.

"No, we really should not, Hannibal," Will answered with thick desire clouding his voice and judgement. The expression he wore the moment he lifted his gaze was captivating and Hannibal got lost in those blue eyes.

"Will." A needy plea escaped the older man's lips. He craved this just as much as Will, still he had doubts if it was the healthiest choice to make.

"You think I feel bad because of last night," the brunet started. "Because I let you take me." Will's lips trembled at the vivid memory of Hannibal moving against him. He still felt sore and aching from the harsh experience of giving himself to somebody for the first time. It seemed like a bad, overused joke, but it was true. His ass hurt like hell when he'd tried sitting on the kitchen chair. Every little twinge of pain had to remind him of his broken will. And of the unexpected joy that came with it.

"I may be confused sometimes, but I'm not this weak or immature to actually think of it in such a way," Will spoke, trying to sound unabashed. "You needn't worry about me. I want this. As badly as I wanted it yesterday." Will blurted out, breath sped up, eyes fluttering, and mouth swollen from sucking the skin. He felt his heart almost in his throat when he thought about being fucked again while his skin was still torn, raw and aching.

*Oh, how it tingles all of my nerves as I envisage the sour pain of it. Give me it, give me everything, and make me give in. Don't let me beg for this. I will take it all. I will abide. I will dwell in the silent light and bright noise of bones being crushed under the force of your bloodthirsty compassion.*

*I want this,* words echoed through Hannibal's mind, the control that he had put on himself was leaving him with each revelation. He screamed inwardly at Will's confession. The vision of Will's writhing body beneath him again, honest, responsive and oversensitive, took over, and he got lost in the awaken thrill.

Without further conversation, Will reached for the other man's hand and put it at his hip, then pulled it down a bit to his bulged crotch. There was a deep inhale coming from Hannibal when he did it. "I need you, Hannibal. So where do we go from here?"

Hannibal looked at the boy's heated face, the arousal painted on his features. Will was flushed, his pupils dilated, voice hoarse. So turned on it was probably unbearable for him to stand the hotness. Hannibal smiled weakly and unbuckled Will's leather belt, then unzipped his pants in one quick motion and groped the aching erection hidden underneath the fancy clothes. "I can feel the heat coming off of you," Hannibal said, words thick on his tongue. "You really do need my help." He stroked his lover's cock few times in a painfully slow manner.

"Is there something you're gonna do about it, D-doctor Lecter?" A soft, teasing whisper broke the space around, and warmth hit Hannibal's earlobe. His own cock responded right away as he heard his last name being spoken. Such a reckless behaviour; trying to provoke a monster like this was a suicidal mission and Will still didn't feel like escaping.

Hannibal let out a strained grunt as he moved his fingers against Will's penis with fervent desire fluttering inside, ready to burst and burn brightly. "I'm going to take care of you, my boy." A low hiss answered.
Will loved Hannibal's dirty talking as he just discovered. There was a lot he had been learning about himself these days.
Will's breath hitched, trapped in the volcano erupted in his lungs, when Hannibal sunk to the floor unceremoniously and looked up at his face, gaze full of passion, light in it eclipsed completely by the heavy need. The pull of it way too strong to hold back. Hannibal pressed the flushed cheek against Will's crotch, then sighed quietly and closed his eyes for a brief moment. An addictive thing to witness.

Mesmerising. Meant to be written down with a red ink on the internal side of the transparent skin. Meant to hurt.

The brunet couldn't help it, he put his hand on Hannibal's head. Not pressing his face more against himself, not trying to draw it away. Just a light, steady pressure to feel the moment, to stay in it. To preserve the continuum of touch, the great order of interfusion between the flesh.

Will stared down at the man kneeling down in front of him, on the verge of submission. It made his blood run faster and skin itch, all the receptors confused and fuelled with pure excitement, to see this wild animal, a predator, in such a pose. It reminded Will of that one eventful day, from few months ago, when Hannibal had done the same, but then started tasting his bare skin, kissing the scar of his own designing over and over again. He had even cried, memory completed the picture.

Will hoped it wasn't the case now. He wasn't ready for the mighty sorrow or sentimental truths of past mistakes and glory that followed.

He wanted to stay standing, shaking a bit, with his cock painfully hard, his body eager to feel. Anticipating. Inwardly, he adored the suffering of this whole process, the strenuous lust crippling his insides somewhere deep within, not completed, not executed yet, still denied. It was never clear what exact part of his body felt it the most; where the pain truly began, which path the pain walked on, where the pain ended.

Too scattered and dissolved, split and not leaving any chance for Will to find the one and only source. It reverberated through his whole being, like an echo of a very important calling. Like church
bells, from an unknown direction, pleading with their unyielding iterativity to come by a chapel. To stay there for a bit.

Was it a call to pray for sins or to beg for forgiveness in advance?

"Please." The younger man heard a weak noise, strained, followed by the heavy swallowing. He was looking hard and relentlessly in the sweet maroon paradise. "May I have you in my mouth, Will?

A shallow breath escaped Will as he heard the polite tone of such an obscene proposal. He parted his lips but no words came out. The sharp sensation of pulsing pain and pleasure in his crotch tested his ability to speak for a second. With pupils dilated, Will stroked Hannibal's lips gently with his thumb, curious to taste the shape of his mouth, the touch so tender it was on the edge of teasing. He didn't need to say anything, Hannibal certainly knew the answer to that. He could read it from Will's face as he would read it from an open book. There was no alternative reality in any universe in which any version of Will would say no.

It was always going to be yes. To everything the man would whisper. "You may," Will said eventually, voice soaked in coarse craving, the urge to unleash aggression brought close to the surface.

Hannibal was not patient today. With one harsh move, his hands pulled Will's pants and underwear down till it dropped low to Will's feet. A gentle caress of slim fingers applied directly to his thighs sent hundreds of shivers down his spine.

Hannibal opened his mouth.

He swallowed Will whole at once, his cheeks hollowed out. Will looked down at him, blood boiling. **A beautiful picture of lusty greed.**

Before Will thought about it he'd been already clutching Hannibal's hair and twisting soft silvery strands in his fingers. In response, Hannibal ran his hand down his spine, feeling as his back arched at the touch.

The older man wrapped his warm lips around the tip of Will's cock and put little kisses there teasingly. Will only clench his teeth, the tension building inside his muscles. He could pull the other man's hair to give him a silent command since now he felt a quiet sense of power running through his whole being.

He was in control.

He didn't do anything, though, not yet, letting Hannibal meet his needs with every touch. Will gasped loudly as he felt softness tightening around him, while he started throbbing and pulsing more, then a hot tongue licked him from the base to tip. Seconds were being stretched to neverending forever.

"Nhh..." Will pushed his head back, closed his eyes shut, letting the sensation of hot tightness wash over him, small pitiful moans hitting his ears, a far away background. Was it his or Hannibal's? Did it matter?

Ruthless teeth bit hard, Will's inner thigh pulsing. "F-fuck!" He yelled, sharpness striking as the pain resonated in his groin. With eyes opened in surprise he looked down accusingly to see the unforgiving gaze and bloodied lips clamped around his penis.
Oh, let those wet lips be damned.

Dark eyes shone and they held a threat, the death wish; muddy waters running downstream across the lands of lust and violence, and the edges playing with flow to call out the danger. "Don't take your eyes off me unless you wish to shake hands with transcendent agony," they almost screamed, and Will's body got the message. He shuddered heavily, his heart pumping like a wild wind in the forest, strong enough to bend the treetops, to make whole trees fall and design them into chaotic form of piled up forest bed. Left to rot.

Will ran fingers through the older man's hair again and massaged his scalp tenderly, a calming gesture toward the beast. An unspoken apology. Hannibal squinted his eyes lightly, then took Will's whole length in his mouth again, this time deeper until Will's cock hit the back of his throat. He gagged a bit, salt on his tongue, then deliberately swallowed him more, eagerly sucking the swollen erection and trying so hard to time his breathing and also to tame the wild desire to devour the precious flesh. Will only stared as Hannibal was bobbing his head with enthusiasm, making weak and needy noises like he was the one receiving a blowjob. Will looked surprised when he noticed quite a big tent rising in Hannibal's pants. He sighed softly, licking his lips.

A hotness in his cheeks couldn't be helped, neither the pulsing wave of pleasure and perversion as he couldn't think of anything else than fucking Hannibal's face right now. He craved nothing but the sight of this man, his man, on his knees, suffocating with his dick pushed deep down inside. He needed the absolute acceptance, the capitulation, the white flag, the cum in Hannibal's mouth and all over his face. To see him besmeared, undone under his watchful eye.

He wanted the humiliation to spread across Hannibal's highly dignified features. "Choke on me," he blurted out in a low voice, and the feral commanding tone felt like somebody else. Will's eyes were fogged, focused on Hannibal's swollen lips, a bit absent.

Will pushed his hips suddenly, thrusting himself forcefully into the man's face. Hannibal cried out helplessly, and started swallowing frantically around Will's hard shaft. Having put strong hold of both of his hands on Hannibal's head, pushing firmly, Will heard an obscene gurgle and felt warmth spilling in his guts at the sound. "I want you to choke on my dick until you can't breathe."

His own hissing seemed distant. The demanding urge took control over Will and he didn't wait for the permission to abuse and violate, he didn't need Hannibal's explicit consent to be cruel, because when he looked him in the eyes, he saw millions of little sparks and the silent plea, a wish to be used, and Will wanted nothing but to fulfil it.

With hands wrapped around the older man's skull, he started pushing his cock into the hot cave, movements fastening with growing tension. Hannibal only widened himself more to take everything Will had to give, cheeks flushed. Will was close, so close... Yet he wanted to have Hannibal like this forever, always on his knees, at his feet. Never leaving. A twisted fantasy of fucking himself against his throat for whole days, with no rest for those beautiful swollen lips, totally numb and wrecked, and still eager to welcome him and give pleasure, almost took him over the edge. He pulled himself out of Hannibal's mouth and saw how a thick trickle of saliva and precome dripped down his chin and jaw. Hannibal started coughing while drooling. Heady excitement rushed through Will's veins, his lower stomach clenching painfully.

He didn't allow Hannibal to stay hollow for long. While he was still breathing harshly, panting, and desperately trying to calm down, Will tightened his grip, pulled the silky hair, and pushed forward his hips, thrusting in a violent manner until he was fully in again, then buckled and stayed like this, enjoying the heat and wetness. Wonderful tightness overpowered his senses as he filled Hannibal to the point where he couldn't breathe at ease. Will's gaze sharpened, focused on the glassy eyes, staring
at him from below. "Hold it," Will snarled, his whole body shaking in reaction to his own actions and to overwhelming pleasure pulsing through his cock. Hannibal didn't try to avert his gaze, he looked at him unwaveringly, and there was a strong emotion hidden behind his eyelids. It was soft, loving, bordering on pure adoration. The intimate connection never faltered, even when Hannibal felt tears coming up to his eyes and soon enough he let out a miserable sob against his will.

"You can cry for me. I want you to," Will gasped and furrowed his brows, just like he didn't mean to say this and surprised himself with the words. Gaze lingering, Hannibal gave away few muffled yelps which sounded utterly devastating, pathetic even. But he didn't wrestle to let go of Will's cock. He couldn't even if he wanted to. Will's squeeze was strong, unwilling to back down.

Will was moaning out loud by this point, rubbing Hannibal's scalp while making small circles with his hips, feeling how pleasant it was to stay inside Hannibal's heat. Lost in the rising pleasure, ready to explode, he almost didn't hear more muffled noises, but he felt the slightly panicked movements and soon enough Hannibal's body started struggling instinctively to withdraw. The older man attempted to breathe through his nose but it was no use as Will saw through it and deliberately pushed his face against his lower belly, pressing strongly against the pubic hair to forcefully pin him down, taking away any chance to escape suffocation. "I said, don't breathe." He heard himself hiss in a harsh tone, clouded with dark lust, as he watched Hannibal's nose snuggled against his crotch. "Breathe only my skin..."

He wasn't sure anymore if he truly wanted to hurt Hannibal or just humiliate him a bit. Maybe his true goal was to own him in the most primal way possible. Maybe there wasn't one correct answer to this. Maybe he wanted it all.

After a few quiet choking cries and constricted groans, Hannibal gave in completely, his eyes fluttering closed. The fingers he had been tightening around Will's waist for all this time to hold onto were gone. Now his hands were clamped loosely around Will's knee.

Tears were rolling down Hannibal's red cheeks. Will pulled out his wet cock and took in the sight. He felt dizzy and twitching.

Then the dull sense of guilt came in and caught him off guards.

_Fuck. Who am I, who are you, who have I become because of you._

Will had to speak it out loud somehow, not aware of his stuttering, because the face Hannibal made and the look he gave him were both speaking of the eternal hellfire.

**The bloodlust, the biblical famine, the inferno.**

"D-don't," Hannibal barely managed to cough up, hopelessly struggling to recover his normal breathing. Will scowled, then widened his eyes, understanding hitting him like a hand slap across his cheek.

He was going to beg for this.

"William..." Hannibal spoke in a small voice, careful not to shed more tears when his throat ached, irritated. "Don't l-leave, don't take your skin away from me." A wet, bony cheek warmed Will's cock as he felt it nuzzling against him tenderly. It was such an animalistic move, yet fond and vulnerable beyond any reason.

Will swallowed hard to cut out the underlying emotion. "What do you want?" It wasn't what he meant to say, he wanted to ask if he'd hurt Hannibal but didn't have the courage to do so.
"Your hands on my head. Put them back again," Hannibal whispered, voice breaking. "Please."

**Please - please, please - please.**

Will heard blood pumping in his ears in tune with the begging melody, warmth spilling inside his head, the pressure high, his nerves relentless in their work. He was still achingly hard so he decided not to fight the arousal. Biting his lips, he placed hands carefully on Hannibal's head. As he was looking down at his crumbled frame beneath, he sensed little shaking in Hannibal's shoulders and knees. Will's belly twisted in an intense mixture of guilt, pain and thrill.

Hannibal moaned weakly as he felt the younger man's penis throb a bit. He opened his mouth once again, jaws stretching, and sucked on Will lovingly, wetting the whole length with his saliva. Will groaned, the pleasure returning to him like a sea wave when warm lips clasped around him tightly, then started stroking the pulsing shaft diligently.

Will didn't dare to take control again. He simply surrendered to sweet ecstasy, bending a bit and lifting his left hand to hold onto a countertop since it didn't take long for him to start trembling, knees weakening. "Oh my g-god..."

Hannibal knew exactly what he was doing. His lips and tongue were almost suspiciously skilled, Will hadn't ever been given a heavenly blowjob like this. After a minute, the brunet felt the unmistakable contractions, pleasing twinge in his lower abdomen and shivers coming down his groin. "I'm gonna-" The slurred words were choked down as hot mouth took all of him, holding in, and slick fingers rubbed his oversensitive balls. Will's muscles flexed, breathing out of control, and he couldn't give any other warning than the loud whining scream as he came.

Hannibal held him through his orgasm, watching with teary gaze his wincing face, conquered by pure bliss, as Will released his load inside his mouth. Hannibal moaned, sinking into Will's sparkling gaze. He smiled faintly, knowing Will didn't close them because he was aware of how much it pleased Hannibal to see him without the cover. *Naked.*

He swallowed all of Will's semen while staring at the boy in a provocative way; Will's sperm was thick, slightly bitter, a bit salty at the end, yet pleasant on his tongue. He savoured the distinctive taste, licking his lips afterwards. "Thank you, Will. Your taste belongs to me now."

Will's pupils dilated. "You're unbelievable..." Hannibal chuckled in reply, and Will's heart fluttered at the sound. "Hannibal-"

"Don't." A cold whisper answered before Will formed the sentence. Brows furrowed low, the brunet took a deep breath. "Don't go there. There is no need for that."

Before Will thought of pulling his pants back on, Hannibal had already done it for him. When nimble fingers touched his belly while buckling his belt, Will felt a strong shiver running down his lower back. He loved and hated that oversensitive state which always took place seconds after having an orgasm. Hannibal obviously noticed since he smirked, and Will kept down a little moan trying to breathe life into the space around them.

"Then why do I feel not so good about this?" Will stroked Hannibal's still damp cheek, fingers brushing the tears away. "I didn't mean to hurt you."

"Oh, you *did* mean it. Don't run away from this," Hannibal spoke in a collected voice, but it was tinged with underlying amusement. He looked at Will from his position. "Can I get off my knees now?"
Will almost choked on air. "Why do you ask? You don't need my permission." Hannibal stood up and cupped the boy's face in his steady hands.

"Maybe I don't, maybe I do," Hannibal kissed Will's temple, tasting the salt of his skin, then pressed his forehead against Will's. "It is not about what I need. You needed to feel powerful enough to see how the dynamics is prone to constantly change, the flow of it fluid and unstable. Volatile." A warm whisper tried to lull Will into lethargy of reason, yet somehow the meaning of the words just spoken maddened all of Will's cognitive functions. "The simple need for control and dominance is one of the most primal and fundamental ones. Nothing to be ashamed of."

Will shoved Hannibal's arms away, stepping back from the man. "You did all of this because you felt I needed to get a grip?" Will rose his voice higher than intended. "You gave me control, you let me..." Will bit his tongue, and heated rage came up to his face. "You made yourself submissive on purpose to mess around with my head. To take care of my emotional inconsistency and mental instability. To manipulate me into choices again." Will's eyes turned into the icy shade of blue, lips wincing visibly, jaw twisting in anger. "Like you always do."

"Will." Hannibal sent a soft warning, one syllable meant more than whole sentences of direct threats. Hannibal would never lower himself to having a strong argument, with vulgar insults and offensive consonants, would he?

"No, Hannibal. Hell, no!" Will shook his head. "What were you thinking? Was this some sort of a twisted game or maybe just your personal recipe for a sex therapy?"

Hannibal closed the distance between them in one step and kissed his reckless boy's dirty, ill-bred mouth. "Would you finally shut up?" Hannibal breathed into his lips, words thick and unfamiliar on his tongue, then abused them with no mercy, massaging harshly with his own. They kissed each other until they felt numb and spent.

Before they knew they were both hard again. "I want the best for you, William," Hannibal said in a feeble whisper, breaking the kiss. "But don't you dare to think I was acting out the role of a submissive lover to manipulate you later into exact same position. Or into anything really." Will looked him in the eyes and saw only honesty, he felt the truth as it'd been scripted and written all over his skin, but still it couldn't erase the anger bulged up in his insides. "It was real and it was much harder situation to put myself into than you assume, Will. Still, ultimately I did it because I wanted to. I don't deliberately do things which don't bring me pleasure." Hannibal smiled in this sad, heartbreaking manner and Will's heart sank, melted at the mere sight of it. "Do you think so low of me?"

"It's not the case and you know it, Hannibal." Will's lips parted and he panted heavily. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"I'm yours, how could I be anything else than okay?"

Will fell completely silent. He spoke only when he achieved holding back the tears. "Good."

Hannibal pulled him close in the embrace, holding tightly. "If you wanted to, I would let you do it over and over again. Allow you to bring me to my knees. I would gladly kneel every time you asked, simply because I'm yours." The repeated confession hit Will's heart and soul just as much as the first one, if not more. "I would eat you time after time until you'd pass out from the pleasure, your whole body glistening with sweat and writhing underneath my merciless torture, unbearable heat taking hold of you..." A hot whisper entered his ear, lips putting small kisses there. "Viciously, out of malice and pure selfishness, I'd bring you back each time you would faint to keep you going insane, melted in my mouth eager to lick and suck..." Hannibal slipped fingers underneath Will's shirt and
touched his torso, then rubbed the nipples. They responded instantly to the teasing. "...Forced to feel it all, forced to come dozens of times against your will and despite that exhausted, wasted body of yours, struggling to get any rest..." Will couldn't stop a small yelp. "I would do it all, savouring your taste each time, until I decided you were done and I was full, hunger fading away."

_Damn you, damn that pretty mouth._

Will felt wet, sticky fluid in his pants. "Shit. I've almost come again." His panicked tone made the older man smirk. They kissed again. "You didn't have your release yet. I'm not gonna leave you like this. Tell me what you want me to do."

"I don't want you to do anything now. I'm more than fine. We're running late already."

"I can jerk you off pretty quickly. It's not like you're gonna last long in this state," Will offered unabashedly.

Hannibal shook his head, then smiled fondly. "As much as it pleases me dearly to hear you being so eager to help, I must decline your lovely offer. We should be on our way." Hannibal fixed his hair, and took a few steps back from Will. "I'm glad you remembered about my plans for today."

Will felt his heart wobbling as he gazed at the man to see his eyes fully blessed with deep affection.

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Having taken a brisk shower, Will and Hannibal got into a black sedan. Will sighed inwardly as he recalled their conversation before buying the car. The younger man wanted a Jeep, not so much fancy as practical, preferably by a little-known producer. Hannibal hadn't let that happen because of his particular tastes, and the argument eventually ended with the compromised choice, the Cadillac CTS. Will didn't want to know or even guess what Hannibal's first, original choice had been.

"Where are we heading?" Will fastened his seat belts. He didn't get the answer. The silence being laid out around them, the third passenger. Will huffed softly. "Of course. You won't tell me."

"It's intended to be a surprise," Hannibal finally spoke, and his features darkened a bit.

Will watched his face carefully, then his silent moves as he was driving swiftly. Will was not able to turn his gaze away. There was something heavy hanging in the air.

Will thought of all the possible scenarios which could be played out tonight. His imagination put different suggestions in front of him to take and look at from close distance. He straightened in his seat and looked at the road through the window. It was already dark so he withdrew into himself, indulging in a wide range of possible scenes.

Hannibal could take him to one of those expensive, refined restaurants where a person would have to act out every single convention that humans had ever come up with to hide their raw, unrefined nature from each other. He could take him to dinner and simply enjoy his company, soft, pleasing silence around them but never between them since they were constantly talking. Just not always with words.

Hannibal could even propose. How wild of an image it truly was? Was it really wild or fitting continuation at this point? Would Hannibal know the answer before asking, confident as ever, or would he be nervous and, for the first time in his life, even a little self-conscious? Would he know by just looking briefly into Will's eyes that it would always be yes, _damn you, yes, bloody yes_?

But maybe, just maybe, Hannibal would take him somewhere peaceful, absent from people's
presence, not corrupted with their unavoidable narrowness of thought given to the place. That way, it could become their own fantasy, new-born hope; a place to come back to. It could be a lake with its own tiny beach. With Hannibal by his side, any lake would be the lake of fire. Or they could stand by the river, holding each other, and out of nowhere Hannibal would kiss his neck, speaking to his skin in a raspy voice: "I wish to pound into you until you can't walk, William. Bend over."

Or he wouldn't say any of those unpolished, most beautiful and youthful, ugly words. Maybe he would just tighten the grip around his neck, hold him still, tender and gentle, love lingering on his touches, and then he would suck life out of him by squeezing his throat and constricting the trachea with determination speaking through the rigid hands, strong arms unwilling to let go. Perhaps he would whisper in a broken voice: "I am Achilles, and you are my heel." Will would argue, barely breathing, but still would manage to get his message through: "I am your Petroclus, your humanity, do not send me into a strange land of even stranger ghosts." Almost strangled, asphyxiated, on the verge of fainting in the tenacious, deathly embrace, he would get to hear the final answer, the goodbye note: "You would go to the battlefield anyway and you would die there horribly in the end for you are the most reckless boy I know. How could I ever allow you to do so? I need to change the pages of our story, my dearest friend," he would whisper with emotion clouding his voice. "I have no choice but to murder the light in your eyes, so the others won't put it out. I need to kill you, so they won't bring you down, and in their and my memory you will stay the same. Glorious as always, magnificent and beautiful in your fragile strength. I must hurt you for I am not strong enough to see it happen to you from the cold grip of a stranger to whom you do not mean a thing." He would kiss Will's grey-blue lips, turning cold, and then add: "I have to take life away from you, otherwise life will take you away from me. It is a fair exchange, isn't it? Who would have held you tenderly like me after the final battle, which you would have lost in the eyes' of vengeful gods, had I not interfered with the fate?" And then Will would be lost to it all, whole world rocking his body to sleep, silent night wrapping windy sheets all over his tired, worn out flesh with shyness. Much later, the sea would be washing him of sins as Hannibal would kiss his resting eyes and lay him down there to fall apart.

"What are you thinking of, Will?"

Will brought his eyes to focus, then turned his gaze to look at the man sitting next to him. "Everything."

"Quite a topic to process," Hannibal said, his eyes never leaving the road. "However your brain works in a remarkably peculiar, yet privileged way that it makes the unthinkable thinkable and the improbable probable. Nothing could ever undermine or falter my faith in your phenomenal imagination. The way you think and the way you feel, those are conjuncted very distinctively due to the great empathy you own."

"You mean, the way I am. And the empathy that owns me," Will corrected, shoulders tensing, jaw clenching a bit. "I am not as unique as you believe me to be."

Hannibal let out a disapproving noise, then allowed the quiet roar of the engine to claim the space and pause the conversation. Will closed his eyes, looking hard into the darkness behind his eyelids. He wondered if it wasn't the best possible afterlife to come upon after dying. A hushed vibrating noise in the background, dark palette of nothingness all around, the numbness from sitting in the same position till the point of this strange state where you stop feeling your body, like you had left it behind you long ago, far away from now, the unnecessary, redundant burden to carry, and you sense only the quiet presence of the other, a balmy flow of emotionless connection. It would contain the highest understanding of two spirits, not aware of their essence. It would be eternal bliss, Will smiled to himself. "Have you ever wished for something to happen differently?" A whisper slipped from Will's lips, almost mocking.
"I have." Hannibal replied right away. "That one unfortunate time when I was walking with your unconscious body on my hands."

Will opened his eyes and gave Hannibal a brief look, eyebrows furrowing.

"Muskrat Farm. I shouldn't have let go so easily." Hannibal's fists clenched on the steering wheel, voice husky. "Let you go." Will's ribcage lifted as he inhaled the air rapidly. "If I could... I would have made you see how out of order the reality truly had been, every time we had been apart from each other."

"Your confidence is going to kill you one day, Hannibal." Will's lips tugged a bit, forming a sad smile.

"Curiosity," the older man clarified. "Curiosity killed the cat."

"Or was it care?" Will inquired, his heart aching, heavy with well-packed insinuations. "... Helter skelter, hang sorrow, care will kill a cat, up-tails all, and a pox on the hangman." With a quivering voice, nearly cracking, the younger man barely managed to say.

The atmosphere thickened, all the air left Will's lungs as he was exposed to Hannibal's piercing glance, deeply penetrating, like it was capable of breaking into his skull, through the bone and muscle structures, to hit the central point somewhere deep within; digging into something undiscovered yet, arcane and hidden even from Will himself. It was heart-rending, agonising, painfully blissful, and Will recognised instantly how much he had always craved it. More and more each time.

*Please, please, please. Pack it as a gift and send it straight to my deepest secrets. Oh, the exact address? It is written all over my face for you to see.*

"Indeed, William." Hannibal regarded his friend with profound fondness. *The boy revealed before my eyes to marvel at,* he thought, a bit delirious in that moment, warmth spilling inside like sunbeams enshrouding thirsty, pale skin in late summer afternoon.
Chapter Notes

Music: "Slow Burn" by Apocalyptica, "Kiss My Eyes And Lay Me To Sleep" by AFI

I fall apart like paper put to flame
The life we had reduce to ashes right before us
Every hurtful word, burned into my side
Much to hard to speak, scarred to deep to hide

Just like a slow burn, stay with me forever
I can't let you ever fade away
Just like a slow burn, say you'll never let me down
And never go out, my slow burn, burning me down

I walk the fire - I feed the flame
I'd walk the fire - I'd feel your flame

The engine's humming was quiet and put Will to sleep. His nap was short and dreamless, and maybe he should've been thankful for that. When he opened his eyes, he found out that Hannibal was looking at him intensely.

"Are we there?" Will's voice a hoarse chord in the silence.

"Yes." Hannibal hesitated while lifting his hand, then pressed it against Will's cheek. "We've reached our destination."

Will let out a little sigh and closed his eyes for a brief moment. The touch was pleasant, warming. Fingers soft and caring. Considering all emotional dimensions his body had been diving into since he met Hannibal, this was the best feeling. Dull, blissful, quiet creek of pleasure. Will sensed his whole body relaxing. Like it was trying to reveal the biggest hope and admit the most horrifying fear, not exactly aware of the difference between those two states, if there truly was any.

Take care of me, I'm thirsty for your gentle torment, his body silently screamed, craving for attention.

"Don't leave me begging..." Will blurted out carelessly.

"I'll be damned if I do," Hannibal spoke. "I may be cruel but I am not malevolent enough to deny you, Will."

"You're destructive."

"Am I?" Hannibal looked Will in the eyes, unspeakable message sent through the wires of touch as the older man stroked Will's chin with fidgety fingers. "Have I destroyed you?"
"No, not exactly," Will admitted. "You destroyed my sense of consistency. My..." He trailed off, leaning into the touch, almost nuzzling against the hand. "Comfort zone. You haven't ruined me. You've only ruined what you considered useless components for my becoming. You've built me up. I am aware. I'm just playing coy so I can keep avoiding the truth."

"Tell me, what's the truth, Will?" Hannibal's voice barely a rustle, the feeling of intimacy growing when Will saw the other man unfastening belts, leaning over and soon enough his warm cheek was rubbing softly against Will's.

"You know the truth, Hannibal. You made me whole again..." Will said, gazing into the maroon abyss. "I'm no longer standing on the crossroad."

"Yes?" A tender brushing against Will's lips sent a thousand needles to his belly. His eyes fluttered in the darkness. The car lights were off, the humming gone. Only concentrated silence remained, full of meanings.

"I've already made the deal and sealed it not only with my blood but with everything I've got to give, haven't I?" Will swallowed down the lingering affection. At those words, clothed with undeniable finality, Hannibal's eyes shone brightly like glittering dark waters when transpierced by invisible lines of serene night force, the radiating moon god, changing the ocean's current with its gravity.

"Will." His name echoed in his ears, lost in the soft, little kisses, murmured hurriedly over and over again until Hannibal eventually put his head in Will's lap, sighing softly. "Jūs esate mano žvaigždė. Visada būti šalia manęs..."

Will didn't know what to say so he said nothing, only lifted his hand to lightly stroke the other man's hair in a gentle caress. Will knew nothing about the exact meaning of those barely audible words, yet he could imagine what they truly meant just by listening to Hannibal's faltering voice, to the warm timbre of his tone. It was the particularly unusual way in which the unfamiliar sounds rolled off the tongue that made Will realise it had to be nothing but genuine. Unfiltered and uncut truth, needed to be evoked out loud; needed to be heard, however, not available to be understood by reason alone. Therefore, Will took it as it was, pleased with the heat arisen in his stomach, not expecting Hannibal to translate.

They had stayed like this for what seemed like hours, but had probably been less than ten minutes. Will didn't dare to move or change positions so he waited for Hannibal to put an end to this blissful harmony of uncluttered breathing and smooth brushing, and to the peaceful melody pealing out in his chest.

It had been another sequence of long, sprawling minutes, ticking to the sleepy rhythm of blood flowing leisurely through their veins; mimicking the tender cadence of hearts molten together in sweet ravishment, before Will and Hannibal disentangled from each other's arms to get out of the car.

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"I've made reservations," Hannibal explained as Will was taking in the sights. What was presented before his eyes was a little castle-like restaurant, much in the nineteenth century style. "I wish to take you to one more place afterwards. I have something to show you, and I don't want to spoil the surprise. If you don't mind."

Will smiled a bit shyly. "I do not."

They walked in and put their coats away. After they had been shown their reserved table, Will sat in a silvery chair, acknowledging that they got a location in the corner, far away from people's curious
glances. "It's cozy here." Will's eyes briefly focused on Hannibal's lips. A shadow of a smile dancing there, distracting Will's emotions.

"I merely wanted you to feel comfortable and secure," Hannibal replied simply. "I am aware of the inconvenience that you may experience when it is expected from you to be social and behave accordingly."

"Thank you." Hannibal's eyes lit up. "For this and everything else."

"My pleasure," the older man said knowingly.

Will's shoulders tensed a bit hearing the remark, yet he couldn't help a small smirk forming on his lips. "Oh, you think you're so smug and clever, don't you?"

Hannibal chuckled, and damn, did it not set a fire in Will's body. "I believe I am, yes."

The teasing tone made Will laugh. He held his friend's gaze for a moment before he opened the menu. "What are we having?"

"Whatever you wish, William. Personally, I'm in a mood for sweet fish and sour sauce." Hannibal tilted his head slightly. "Somehow its taste reminds me of you."

Will almost choked as he swallowed hard. "Probably because I used to fish?"

"Yes, probably." Hannibal gave him the lingering look, his tone at least a bit provocative, suggesting Will that his passion for fishing was completely not the case.

Will's cheeks flushed as he looked away. Then something struck him, a quick flick of unfiltered cockiness, fighting against any decency. "I'm up for some tough beef, I think." Will bit his lower lip hard, knowing that Hannibal's eyes would follow the movement. The blood rushed faster, a hot wave spilling all over Will's face and stomach. The air thickened and Hannibal's piercing gaze almost froze all of his blood cells to death. It was clearly a silent warning before the life sentence. Will was about to say something to ease the tension when a waitress came to take their order. Saved by the bell, Will thought.

Not leaving Will's eyes even for a moment, Hannibal ordered a tea-smoked salmon with citrus-cucumber relish and avocado sushi which had been highly recommended by the waitress as it was the restaurant's great speciality for this month, and Will took smoked beef cheeks and a broccoli side-salad. Nothing too sophisticated for the palate, rather simple, yet the prize undeniably questioned the medium status of the meal. Hannibal asked for red wine, and to Will's surprise, he didn't order the most expensive one. Will was curious about the intention behind it. Was Hannibal trying to be thoughtful by not overwhelming him too much?

Thinking about such possibility made Will happy and he wanted nothing more in that moment but to indulge deeply in the pleasant sensations which it caused. After the wine had been brought to their table, Hannibal poured the dark liquid into both glasses. "Is this a celebration?" Will asked.

Hannibal's brows furrowed. The man lifted his drink. "Isn't it always?" Will tilted his head at the words, and took the glass as well to make a toast. "We are alive, Will."

A celebration of life. Have dining in the company of Hannibal Lecter always meant this, nothing less and nothing more? It surely sounded like everything, an impeccable summary of once lost joy.

Will couldn't catch his breath or thoughts. "Then here's to the feast of those who have survived to live a life," the brunet whispered, then took a sip of alcohol to indulge in its primal, acrid taste.
It had been late in the evening when they had left the place. Will had had too many glasses of wine and anyone could tell by the way he was now walking down the street. Hannibal was light-headed thanks to completely different reasons. He smiled as he watched Will's a bit tipsy attitude unfurling before his eyes, all the sweet, boyish vibrancy glowing, bright and unfettered. Hannibal knew exactly what kind of quality he craved in Will so hauntingly, without any restraints and beyond the point of reason. It was his vitality. He couldn't help falling in love with those dainty, careless ways of behaving, dynamic and cruelly vivid. It was a unique experience to muse on that version of Will; devoid of needless fear of becoming too real and honest with himself or of suffering that comes along with the struggle to maintain the proper demeanour, the low-key morality, the small-town mindset.

He needed to see more of it. Just Will being himself: free, absolutely unbounded, striving to live and dream. "Your tousled look may be the death of me. Please, stop." Will's eyes sparked in reaction to Hannibal's voice.

"We are no longer in the public space. I mean, the street's empty so... I can look however I want to look, Hannibal." The older man hid his amusement by biting his lips. "And we both know you don't really want me to stop."

"Are you trying to seduce me with that youthful spirit of yours, Mister Graham?" A teasing tone echoed, and Will's body reacted faster than his brain registered the words. He inhaled the air sharply, and while still walking, steps a little clumsy and unbalanced, he looked over his shoulder to give Hannibal a challenging look.

"And what if I am, Doctor Lecter?"

Hannibal chuckled in a low voice, then he put hands around Will's waist and pushed him against the nearest wall. "Remarkable and outrageous." A sharp hiss sent storm to Will's lower stomach, his muscles weak, limbs useless against the attack and crotch pulsing when Hannibal harshly pressed his knee in between his legs, forcing them to spread a bit. "You're being a bad boy, Will."

"Oh, b-believe me, I only get worse." Will groaned, hot arousal awaken, urgent pain hitting his groin. "You better watch it."

Hannibal laughed and bit Will's jaw, then started sucking his neck until he heard a satisfying number of gasps coming from the man writhing under his touch. "Do you know what happens to reckless boys like you?" Will grinned, whole face red and glowing, eyes glimmering brightly. The light which shone off of Will was a newly discovered galaxy, a place where Hannibal could stay forever.

"You happen," Will blurted out, on the edge of moaning. Hannibal's eyes fluttered as he stared into the brunet's eyes with intense emotion hidden behind his eyelids.

"Yes. They die long and horribly, William."

"Oh, I see," the boy let out amused, his erection now fully grown as Hannibal kept pushing his knee into it, teasing, and then he started kissing him. "I can die however-ly as long as it's in your arms." A weak murmur slipped between sloppy kisses and Will cupped Hannibal's ass to press his body harder into himself; the maroon eyes glinted dangerously in the dark. Hannibal couldn't think straight, all the sophistication and eloquence long gone. His senses were dimmed with the strong smell of Will's skin, accompanied with softness and eagerness; the honesty of flesh and devotion in the boy's voice when he said the words, they were killing him.

Their hips, on the other hand, were creating a perfect union of moves, urgent and fast, no space...
between them, only feverish breath melted together.

"You're delightful to watch," the older man eventually spoke again.

"You feel delightful in my hand," Will replied after having opened Hannibal's fly to grab the aching shaft. He put a firm hold on it, then started stroking Hannibal's cock. "You're already leaking, Doctor." Hannibal let out a small moaning noise, and kissed Will's neck. "Do you often have a problem with lasting? Is it ageing or are you just too excited?"

Punishment came earlier than Will could have anticipated. His muffled cry rang out as Hannibal turned him around with one swoop and now he was facing the wall, cold and rugged surface unpleasant to the touch, his cheeks burning red, breath sharpened. Hannibal straddled him and pinned there, hands forceful, grip unyielding, then pushed Will's pants down to his knees. Cool air hit the naked skin, and Will only gasped, heart beating like a wild animal on its way to escape the sudden danger. "Excited is clearly an understatement here. I am ravenous when it comes to you, my dear." The younger man hissed quietly when the swollen erection was being pulled against his perineum. "Any witty comment you may wish to add?"

Will gritted his teeth, too absorbed to say anything coherent, alcohol hitting him again with a hot wave of unsteadiness. He ached all over, eager, fighting this absurd need to be filled again, to be possessed. He was truly willing to take whatever Hannibal would give him, even if having dry sex for the second time wouldn't be the best idea right now.

Will lifted his hand, not sure if it was about to get pushed away, then put light pressure on Hannibal's hand on his waist and squeezed it. You may do as you wish. A silent permission.

Hannibal kissed his neck and earlobe gently in response, silence between them growing unbearable. "I wish to get deep inside you and never leave your body to waste..." Will shuddered, the soft whisper sounded so beautifully broken, the words intimate and forlorn as never before. He sensed tears coming up to his eyes. As he squeezed Hannibal's hand harder, the other man rubbed himself against his asscheeks, sighing, then sniffing the saltiness of skin exposed to him. Will cried out in a small voice.

"I won't do it like this. It's not how I've planned it." Hannibal shifted, pressure of his body disappearing. He looked at Will, at his face and chest snuggled to the wall. They were both breathing sharply. Hannibal couldn't help himself so he caressed the pale skin, tracing fingers along Will's lower back, the cleft between his cheeks, then along the inner thigh and back again. Then he smiled, noticing every little tremble and the goosebumps. When two of his fingers went in, intruding Will's stiff entrance rigidly, Hannibal heard a loud whimper of pain, Will's whole body impulsively tensing and jerking a bit. "You're still hurting. I won't rub salt in the wounds." And just like that, the slim fingers were gone.

"What if I want you to," Will said quietly, licking his dry lips.

"You don't." Hannibal turned the brunet over to claim his mouth, their tongues met and wrapped around each other, wet and needy. A loving knot of sorts. Will put both hands on Hannibal's face and soon enough they were all over him, fervently stroking his cheeks, jaw, throat, neck, shoulders, everything available to take and own.

"At least let me take care of you," Will insisted and Hannibal moaned when Will's hand tightened around his painfully swollen cock. "I think I need to apologise and hand it to you, it is definitely not the matter of age." They both smiled faintly and Will leaned in to nibble Hannibal's ear. "You're rock hard. It must be bothering."
The intimate whispering made Hannibal a bit weak in his knees. "It is," he hissed almost desperately.

"I know." Will gazed into Hannibal's eyes and he kept looking the whole time he was stroking him firmly, bringing him closer to the edge with each move. The older man couldn't avert his eyes, entrapped in the bliss of what was inmost and utterly penetrating; a constant union of rain and fire fighting each other off, the gain and the loss. The deepest influence: sharp gentleness on the tongue, soft pain on the skin.

**Compassion.**

When Hannibal came, he hid his face in the crook of Will's neck in wordless expression of gratitude. Will ran fingers through the silver strands, rubbing Hannibal's scalp in a calming manner. "Shhh," he hushed him, hearing loud gasping, and held Hannibal like this for a few minutes. Then it struck him in the right chord, empathy waking up suddenly, hot wave of self-loathing piercing through. "I'm not going to hurt you." A sudden bile in Will's throat made it difficult to speak. "I promise that I won't ever let you down. Please..."

*Please, put your trust in me.*

Will felt how foggy his eyes were, how dizzy his mind, with all of those conflicted, complex emotions, threats and hopes hanging in the air. How come he hadn't thought of it before? Why didn't his great empathy reveal this truth to him?

Hannibal had been scared all along. He'd had to be terrified of this tremendous, indefatigable need, of this wonderfully overpowering feeling arisen between them. Anxious just as much as Will but differently. And Will could feel it clearly now, like an obvious presence in a room when you sense a puff of air behind you, body tensing, and you know that you're not alone there. You just know it in your gut without turning around to see it and face it directly. Will sensed the panicked vulnerability in Hannibal's sharp, erratic breathing and wanted nothing but to domesticate it like a wild, ferine animal. Oh, how he craved to take what was fragile and store it somewhere in the basement, locked safely in pots and jars, only for him to watch or to bring upon.

"Whatever it may be, I will not reject your precious gift. Never again, Hannibal." Will swallowed heavily, throat constricting as he was hugging Hannibal tightly. "Do you hear me?"

The other man simply looked him in the eyes, gaze unwavering. "I do," he answered and didn't wait for Will to speak, just started kissing him into oblivion.

***

"Where are we going now?"

Hannibal looked in Will's direction while driving the car. "It is a secret."

"Secret, part two."

"Yes."

Will sighed, not having much choice but to bear with the situation. Once they'd finally stopped making out on the street like some unsatisfied teenagers, they returned and hit the road again. Will was growing impatient with not knowing what else could happen tonight. It was frustrating. On the other hand, he was still slightly aroused because of what had happened, so it certainly didn't help the cause. "After we'd killed Dolarhyde..." Will closed his eyes for a moment, his jaws tensing. "I had this peculiar vision of us."
The silence was short. "Did you?"

"We embraced each other and fell off the cliff together." Hannibal narrowed his eyes, hands holding the wheel tight. "Well, not exactly just fell. More like I pushed us off and we hit the water, blood spilling all over." Will regarded the other man carefully. "What do you think of it?"

"I think you have been stressed out, full of adrenaline pumping through your veins and then leaving your body to the point of final exhaustion..." Hannibal's lips tightened for a moment before he let out: "It may not mean a thing."

"That's not what you think, not really." Will exhaled a long breath. "Somehow... I was ready to die that night. With you."

"Yes, your resignation and finality had been heard loud and clear. You'd yielded yourself to the will of fate and circumstances." Hannibal shifted slightly in his seat. "You'd chosen to give away your right to choose whether you should live or not and you'd submitted it to fortuity.

"To leave it to chance." Will bit down his lips until he could taste fresh flavour of blood, sweetish copper under his tongue calming his nerves a bit. He wondered if any of this disturbed Hannibal but he couldn't sense any signs of anger. "I'd wanted something illogical, powerful and beyond my control to decide for me if we should've survived the night."

"We did survive," Hannibal said in a calm voice. "Neither you nor I had pushed us off the edge, the restless water hadn't claimed us or sailed our dead flesh to the shore."

"Some part of me will always want to fall, Hannibal," Will let out weakly. "And take you with me so we both taste the soothing arms of death."

Hannibal closed his eyes as he breathed pain into the bitter words, mournful tone striking Will's ears and heart: "We've never left the cliff and we never will. We won't ever be able to fully discard this persistent... call of the void. Is that what you mean, Will?"


I know, Hannibal answered in the same tone to himself. I know.
Midnight had always been the special time for many creatures of the night. Will sometimes liked to drill into the fantasy worlds to capture those creatures, put on their skin and see through their eyes. All of those imaginary, legendary characters. Fairy tales, repeated stories. He was fully aware that the life he had with Hannibal had been anything but a tale, even if dark enough to be one. Still, it made him think of the well-known images and themes spread around the globe and curled up in the common consciousness. Will was not The Beauty, Hannibal was not The Beast. He smiled at the comparison which entered his mind. Hannibal hadn't been cursed with anything, and there was no spell that had made him be the way he was. It was just him, always him, and no evil magic involved in the process. A man and a monster, and all of the shades in between. Now Will was also very intimate with the inhumane level of humanity Hannibal truly owned. He really had it in him, the ability to feel and be touched by those feelings. Will had got to know that, and the knowledge felt insanely good, the most precious secret to keep. Will thought about how oddly divine their relationship could become from now on. A very special case of cruelty married to empathy. Difficult relationship to retain, the impossible possibility. The fire, burning all the exits to escape, and the smoke, dissolving in the air, elusive by nature, and the red diamonds covered in black dust still to come from this deranged combination.

_Hannibal is everything_, Will thought, _the truth, the lies, the consequences_.

So was it a fairytale after all? Will felt like they'd been indeed living inside a narrative, very peculiar and symbolic, and hauntingly charming all the same.

_With a chance for a bloody happy ending._ A hopeful echo prompted.

"It's just an old cabin in the woods. Why are we here, Hannibal?" Will asked, the image of a gingerbread house floated into his head. "Are we gonna hunt down the witch?"
"Will, you're by all means adorable, but no, we are not." Hannibal parked the black sedan and they both started walking along the narrow path leading to the main door of the house. "Unfortunately."

They both smiled. Without a second thought, Will grabbed Hannibal's hand and let their fingers entwine.

_Such a pure gesture, am I stupid for wanting this?_ He thought, yet he couldn't bring himself to take it away. When the other man squeezed his hand in response, he sighed inwardly, trying to stay indifferent to what had just been silently approved.

The house was not as small as it seemed to be on the outside. Will looked around, his eyes trying to catch any specific details. Hannibal stood behind him, unmoving smoky shadow bringing steady pressure of silence upon his shoulders by just being; by existing brightly in the darkest corners of Will's eyesight and Will's yearning heart.

"It can become our or yours only, little bulwark, if you wish," Hannibal whispered from behind, arms wrapped around Will's torso, holding him in this special, loving way that Will couldn't get used to. Its nature too fragile for him to withstand the sudden ache because it made him want to fall completely. A weak spot; too easy to let go, inviting him to throw off rational thoughts and every doubt in order to feel it all. To live through the emotion hidden behind Hannibal's embrace. "It is yours to have, Will."

_Another gift. How many had he received up until now? Was there any limit to the generosity? And what price would he have to pay in the end? Or had it been already paid...?_

"It's for me? The witch cottage?" Will smiled when the other man murmured the affirmation. "Well, I can't say it's not nice... It is-" Hannibal's hands dropped to his belly, and the touch tickled him a bit so he trembled visibly in a small pin of pleasure. "Perfect, Hannibal."

_As everything you give me, he wanted to add but didn't."

"So you like it?" A question was followed by the soft lips brushing against Will's neck, sensitive skin held under sweet control of impatient kisses.

"So I like it."

Hannibal chuckled in a low voice. "There's more." Will scowled in surprise as he turned his face to Hannibal who was wearing a cheerful smile.

_You are my truth._

"What is it?" Will heard his own voice cracking, vulnerable parts alerted, a pleasant anticipation splitting up his insides, warm blood driven to flow faster.

"Upstairs," Hannibal said cautiously. "Your final gift is waiting for you upstairs."

The younger man looked into Hannibal's eyes for answers but didn't get any. He bit his lips, curiosity written on his face, then walked away from the man and looked for the stairs. When he put his feet on the first floor, his legs got heavy, but he kept going and soon enough he felt Hannibal's hand brushing against his, fingers searching for the tight embrace. Will took his hand, held onto it as if it was a lifeline, and slowly opened the door that Hannibal pointed at.

As soon as he did it, Will heard a distinctive noise that he would never mistake for anything else. "Unbelievable..." A golden ball of fur got close to Will immediately, its tail wagging happily, and Will just stood there, totally astonished and dumbfounded. "Damn, it's a dog, it's a fucking dog."
Hannibal winced slightly at used vulgarity, but nodded his head. "Yes, it is."

"God, Hannibal, you're insane!" Will grinned, joy lightening his features as he ran fingers through the dog's thick fur. It was a golden retriever, just like one of his old dogs. How easy it is for you to read me, Will smiled to himself.

The dog started barking joyfully, asking for more attention. Will couldn't help but to fall in love again with the familiarity of the sound. He stroked the pet's neck softly and hugged him tightly, having got to his knees. "Say it," he demanded in a cheerful tone.

Hannibal lifted his brow, standing near and watching the scene. Then he understood and smirked. "It's a fucking dog. I've brought you a golden, furry mess, Will." The younger man laughed, cursing sounded ridiculous coming from Hannibal's mouth. "Are you happy now?"

"Yeah," Will said teasingly, petting the dog lovingly. "I am, actually."

"Then I'm glad that I could be of any help to you in that matter," the older man replied, honesty spreading like a warm blanket. Will lifted his head to look at his man.

"Thank you," he let out simply, not sure what else could be a better or more fitting answer. He didn't have any idea as to how he should've expressed the gratefulness he felt. "You don't know how much it means to-"

"I know how much," Hannibal slipped in and his eyes glistened. "I do, Will. That is precisely why I've put so much effort to bring you joy with the things you like the most. You needn't thank me, let me see you in your element and it will be more than enough."

Just put that wide, sunny smile on your lips and I will be happy as well, Hannibal silently finished his thought.

He noticed Will's movements and soon enough his cheek was being gifted with a tender touch of dry lips. Will didn't stop at that, and kissed the other cheek, then wrapped his arms around Hannibal's neck. "Hold me for a second." The older man quickly pulled him closer, firmly pressing Will's warmed up body against the wall of his chest.

"You're shaking, Will," Hannibal eventually spoke. Will only snuggled more against the other man in response. He couldn't control his hastened breathing. "Will, are you-"

"Why are you so good to me?" Will cut him off, voice hoarse and gravelly all of a sudden. "Why are you doing any of this, when, let's be honest, I surely don't deserve it, do I?"

Hannibal pulled away to look at the brunet. He regarded him carefully, eyes narrowed slightly. "Why do you think?"

Will huffed, a bit exasperated, but didn't say anything to that. He couldn't for he knew how his next words would bring him to tears. He didn't wish for Hannibal to see how easy he could break himself with his own thoughts and he didn't want any pity, so he stayed silent.

"Oh, my lovely boy..." A faint whisper engulfed his senses, and Hannibal's mouth claimed his lips tenderly, breaking the forts once again. "You can be so clueless at times, blind to your own captivating beauty and charms, and to how unique of a creature you truly are, William."

You are my lies.

"Then tell me," Will said in a small voice, eyes fluttering closed. "Educate me."
Hannibal smiled in a subtle way, then kissed Will's eyelids daintily like it was the most fragile part to touch, yet so badly he wanted to corrupt these as well. Wicked ways of honouring debts of compassion. "I... adore you, Will. I've never loved anything or anyone like I love the darks and the lights of your mind and soul," the older man let out slowly, and licked Will's eyes ponderously to seal the confession. "It feels like I have always felt the longing, for all my life, and only waited for your physical form to show up at my doorway."

You are my consequences.

"Yet it has been you who's showed up at my doorway, and since then..." Will felt sudden emotion constricting his throat and rushed memories came to surface along with the need to speak the truth. "I don't think I was going to kill you when I pulled out that knife from my pocket." Will opened his eyes to see Hannibal's reaction, and saw how his face darkened. A horrifying beauty of a Greek god.
"I'd built a ship with my own hands, started a journey and my ultimate goal was to find you, to see you again. And then, in Florence, I wanted to look at the slides of a life that had passed me by. Life I would have had if only I hadn't been so stupidly righteous..." Will's voice trembled, broken on the edges of words. He swallowed hard as he looked away. "...It brought me a great amount of pain to even stand on the same ground that I knew you had been walking on. It burned my feet, and there was so much longing in every move I took which I couldn't entirely understand back then...
Hannibal lifted his hand and stroked Will's cheek, as gently as he'd done it years ago just before he stabbed him. "Now when I reflect on those emotions and all that confusion, I see clearly how easy it should've been to recognise it for what it was. And for what it is."

"Will." The older man brushed his hair, running fingers through the thick curls in a calming manner.

"It is true that I was afraid. I was deeply scared of becoming you, and killing the source felt like the only reasonable rescue I had in store. I needed to try at least." Will smiled wryly at the memory. "But I didn't want to succeed on my mission. It wasn't just forgiveness on my blade. There was pure desperation in my intent, in the way I held onto that knife. The craving to reconcile what we both had felt and what we both had been, together and separately, and together again. Urgency to mark your skin, to hold you in place, to reverse time and keep the connection of our blood."

Hannibal looked bewildered, maybe it was the first and the last time when Will would see him in such a state so he took a mental picture to memorise it. "Did you really think I would end your life so quickly and allow other people to see you like this? I would have never let them be a part of our intimate study in bloodlust."

"I didn't know." Hannibal looked sad now, and shadows cradled his face.

"You didn't know," Will repeated blankly. "How could you know?"

Will sighed and freed himself from the embrace, taking one step back. "You would've seen and felt the nature of my reckoning, had you allowed me to cut your skin deep enough. You hadn't. And instead, you almost cut my head open." Will's jaw tightened, then he laughed nervously. "You couldn't get a taste of the secrets held in my heart so you decided to take the secrets out of my brain."
Will saw how Hannibal's hands curled into fists, yet it was too late to stop words from spitting. "You decided to eat those secrets which was a really low thing to do and quite abysmal, wasn't it?"

"Will..."

"You must have been truly overpowered with what you felt at that moment. You just didn't know how to cope with that, did you? And yet I am way much worse of a fool for you, so no need for worries or apologies. And now that I've opened myself up in so many different ways, and put my heart on the silver tray, will you take it and want to eat it as well?" A shallow breath escaped Will's
mouth, eyes on fire. "Or should I cook it for a little longer before I serve myself as the main course? I wonder if it will be to your liking, since I've been thinking, silently praying: god, let my taste be enough for his sophisticated palate, let my flavour burn into his tongue, stomach and memory, and never leave those places, so he would never enjoy anything better, forced to come back to me for more. Only I've come to realise... I don't have anything else to offer, so it quite bothers me. How long it will take him to swallow me down, how long until he's full and sick of the meat."

Hannibal didn't notice tears streaming down his face. "Stop it already, William, or you will cross the line." A thread hung in the air, but the silence was short.

"I don't care, Hannibal. I stopped caring about lines and boundaries long time ago." Will got close again and this time it was Hannibal that moved away, trying to escape the touch. "What's wrong? Haven't you always wanted it?"

"You are explicitly rude, William, rude beyond reason and salvation..." A feeble whisper echoed.

"I am what I am... And I am yours." Will put steady hands on Hannibal's chest, tracing sharp inhales, feeling out the pressure of fixed muscles under his touch. "I know nothing about healthy ways of saying thank you for all the things you do. And for how you still put up with me..." Will put his lips against Hannibal's temple and held it there. "... But I'm giving myself over to you, all of me, and this time it's not a lure, not a decoy of any kind. So don't reject the gift, take it." The whispering felt warm, intense and full of the raw need, it was burning into Hannibal's whole being and settling in. "I may be strong since I've survived until this day, but not strong enough to survive the dull sorrow of lonely tomorrows to come. Please, do anything but that. I'm as accustomed to you leaving me behind as you probably are to my futile attempts of murdering you."

"Such a reckless behaviour..." The older man let out a choked gasp, breath hot on his tongue. "... Should be forbidden."

"Bon appétit," Will whispered, the alluring spell meant to titillate and incense. A feral growl escaped Hannibal's throat, twisted images floating into his head. He grabbed Will's hair and pulled it forcefully, bringing his lover into the kiss. It was brutal and vicious, just like Will's confession.

"Why didn't you tell me back then...? Why, Will?" Hannibal's hands tightened around the other man's throat, strong pressure a solid foundation for Will as the air was being cut off. His lips winced, forming a cruel smile.

"I didn't want to spoil the surprise," he barely hissed out, then kissed Hannibal's slightly opened mouth. Dizziness came faster than he expected, his eyes suddenly becoming foggy.

"Do you believe I will always come to the rescue and save you from myself?" Will's limbs went weak and he struggled to keep his eyes open.

"I w-would n-never t-take you... for g-granted like this..."

A stifled yelp hit Hannibal's ears as he let Will go, grip loosening. Now they were both having tears in their eyes, both unwilling to avert their gaze from each other.

"Oh, how unpredictable can you be when you want to." Hannibal laughed bitterly. "How not to fall in love with that?"

Will coughed, then smiled contrarily. "How not to fall in love with being strangled on a daily basis?"

Hannibal gave him a silent warning with the dark look he was wearing now on his face.
"Did I forget to mention before how much I love when you do that?" Will could swear that he saw how Hannibal's pupils dilated. "I get turned on every time your hands are remotely close to my neck." The other man gritted his teeth, posture rigid, pure darkness taking over his features. "And I like the red marks I'm left with when you're done with me."

"Oh no, you didn't," Hannibal murmured as he gave in to his primal instincts, pushing the boy on the nearest surface which turned out to be a bed that the dog occupied. Sensing the rapid movements, the pet got off the bed and with a loud bark ended up on the floor, watching the scene carefully. When Will's back hit the mattress, Hannibal straddled him, ferocious look on his face, silvery hair ruffled.

"Wait, you can't... I'm hurting all over." Will let out in a weak voice, eyebrows lifted in a mocking gesture.

*You little, adorable, manipulative, self-destructive shit,* Hannibal thought to himself as he was undressing Will from all the unnecessary layers of clothing.

"No, I am not going to do that, no." Will stopped smiling as confusion appeared on his face. "I'm going to smite that smile off of your pretty face, mylimasis. I'm going to put you on the edge for as many times as it pleases me and you will not get any release until I say so," Hannibal growled out and to prove his point he grabbed Will's hardening dick and wrapped fingers around the base, squeezing firmly. "You're not allowed to come so you are not going to, is that clear?"

Chills ran down Will's whole body. "As hell," the younger man cried out, pain, pleasure and the twisted thrill taking hold of him completely.

"Good." Hannibal started stroking Will's swollen shaft, movements rigid and malicious. "When I'm finally finished, you can have your reckoning. As cruel as you need it to be."

Will gasped and surrendered to the world of sensations.

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The room was in the absolute dark, all lights off, hushed breathes and quiet cries the only witnesses to what was playing out.

Will was sprawled on the bed, lying naked and soaked in his own sweat, writhing and squirming, giving away weak, pleading noises mixed with constant sobbing that followed every sharp movement of Hannibal's relentless hands. The urge to come was overwhelming to say the least, yet every time he got dangerously close to it, Hannibal took the tight pressure away, leaving him to begging. He was a complete mess right now with his hair dishevelled, face wet. Frustration made him yell and thrust his hips more than a few times, but all he got was a teasing smirk on the other man's lips.

"How are you feeling, Will? Tired already?" Will groaned loudly, his worked up body tensing again, shivers coming down his spine at the low cadence of Hannibal's voice. "I love you like this. Could watch you in denial all day if I'm to be utterly honest."

Will moaned, crying again. "Fuck you, Hannibal."

"Soon," he whispered quietly, abounding lust on his tongue, maroon eyes glowing with want. Will's heart almost stopped beating.

Hannibal started jerking him off again, rubbing aching erection. It was Will's sixth time already, yet he didn't get to come for the past five times that he'd been mercilessly edged. He felt exhausted, worn out from being strained like this, everything in him tensed and sore to the core, only one need, one
thought in his mind. Let me, I beg you, please.

He had never been denied in such a way; it didn't feel good to be suspended and teased so roughly, it was more painful that he would expect it to be. Then why was he excited and flushed by the mere thought of Hannibal controlling his body and pleasure, why did he want more of that intimacy?

"You're k-killing me with t-this..." He wept as the movements became faster and he was fully hard again, throbbing, his foreskin almost purple. He looked down at his penis, and then in Hannibal's eyes. It was more than obvious that the other man enjoyed the view, watching Will's hopeless struggle and tears. It made Will's stomach twitch pleasantly.

"And yet you like dying like this, Will." A hot whisper hit his earlobe, a wet tongue licking it passionately. "Admit it."

"I d-do, it's s-sick..." The younger man managed, breathless for a second with his muscles tensed, toes curled up against the sheets. He was close again, pleasure warming his cock from the inside, the heat and the twitching growing unbearable. "God, let me...!" But the hand was gone again, and the only touch left on his skin were chaste kisses on his cheeks, brushing away salty tears.

"No, d-don't!" The denial hurt more each time it happened. Will gritted his teeth, filled with anger and fury, his lungs burning. The pressure was too much. He felt dry lips on his own. He didn't reciprocate the gesture, sobbing. "Beautiful." Will heard, and the touch disappeared just like the weight on his body, pinning him down for the last hour of bittersweet torture.

Will watched confused a bit as Hannibal took off all of his fancy clothes and stood in front of him, beside the bed, holding a small blade in his right hand. He threw it in Will's direction and it landed beside him on the bed covers.

"Show me your gratefulness now. The need, the desperation, the flaming rage, everything. I want to feel your everything, William." The brunet licked his lips, not able to look away from the perfectly carved, naked body. Hannibal looked stunning in his primal form, lean and strong, every part of him fierce and hard. Hot wave hit Will with full force as he picked himself up to his knees and grabbed the knife. "Mark me the way you want. I crave your judgement upon me."

Will swallowed down the bile in his throat, excitement making him itch all over. "Come to me." Will's voice was croaky by this point, heavy desire spilling out in his belly. Hannibal came closer, leaning in, then obediently knelt on the bed in front of Will, his face inches from the brunet's, their breath entwined.

Will eventually lifted his hand and traced fingers along Hannibal's sternum, eyes locked on his luscious lips. Hannibal's body trembled slightly when Will's hand lowered and the other one, gripping the blade firmly, pressed its sharp edge against the sensitive skin of his neck. The older man moaned faintly as the cold blade touched his collarbone, then his chest, and it delved a bit into his skin there. Will inhaled sharply, adrenaline kicking in as he outlined a vertical pattern with the blade pinned down to Hannibal's breastbone, slowly sliding down his stomach, and ending its little journey on the navel. The pressure was not enough to do a serious damage, yet the thick gush of blood dripped down and Will leaned in and licked it straight away, not giving permission to waste the precious fluid. Wet lips teased Hannibal's skin, tongue slipping in the navel, abusing the tiny hole for a moment. "Lie down," the younger man ordered dryly.

Hannibal obeyed, pressing his back into the mattress, staring at Will with mouth slightly open. Will liked how patient and receptive Hannibal was, totally docile, waiting for Will's next move.

Will leaned over to taste the skin once more. He touched the side of Hannibal's ribs, rolled his
nipples between thumb and forefinger, then licked it thoroughly. When he bit down the sensitive spot, Hannibal jolted a bit. Will smirked and took the blade once again, moving it carefully against Hannibal's stomach, then lower, pressing it to his crotch. Will looked down to see how rigid and cherry-red Hannibal's cock was, and narrowed his eyes, giving a brief glance at the man's flushed face. Hannibal's eyes gleamed in the dark, they were full of endless hunger, he could tell.

The younger man pressed the sharp edge forcefully against Hannibal's underbelly until he caused bleeding. Hannibal whimpered shamelessly. Will's heart pumped faster through his veins at the pitiful sound, dark pleasure sinking in. When he pushed the blade against Hannibal's groin and caressed it lightly at first, but then changed the pressure to trigger a warm stream of blood to bob up there, the older man winced visibly, jerking away from the touch. Will held him tight with the other hand, trying to prevent the man from moving and spread his legs wider, then he broke the skin more and he didn't stop until he was satisfied with the outcome. Hannibal's breath quickened and became rapid. "Will," he cried out eventually, eyes closing shut.

Will hushed him and stroked his inner thigh in a gentle way, trying to calm him down. Then he returned to the task at hand and carefully cut Hannibal's skin few more times with precise movements, each time drawing blood as well as constricted yelps and moans from the man wriggling underneath his steady touch. It was breathtaking, seeing Hannibal compliant like this, and so responsive and sensitive at the same time. The younger man stared down at his own piece of work, bloody composition of lust and acceptance. The blood was soaking into the sheets now, but there was some of it left on Hannibal's leg, still flowing leisurely. Will couldn't help himself so he put soft embrace of lips to the injured part, sucking in the blood, metallic taste pleasant on his tongue, his nostrils suddenly flared. This blood kink was more than he thought it could be, it was doing so many things for him. He could feel hotness spreading across his whole body, pleasure taking over and his cock was throbbing again. A dangerous game, Will thought, because I want so much more than that.

Hannibal hissed quietly, trying to stifle more sounds by biting down his dry lips. He cried out anyway as he felt Will's mouth on his aching shaft. Will had never done it, it was his first time tasting anyone in such way, and now his lips were bloodied thus it made the perfect picture for Hannibal to witness. He looked up to see his lover's face. The thirst written all over it was undeniable. Hannibal's cheeks were red as a ripe fruit, breath short and ragged, eyes shining and teary. "Oh, Will..." He only managed to let out, shivers coming down his lower back.

Will didn't wait for any coherent comment. Squeezing the base of the cock tightly with one hand, Will swallowed down Hannibal's pulsing erection with mouth wide open, and eyes still locked on his face. Hannibal was not an average size, his cock long and thick, and Will could still remember how amazingly full he felt with it implanted deep inside his ass, how it burned when it was splitting him up. Now he gagged a bit when the tip of it touched the back of his throat so he repeated the motion a few times to stretch his jaw, and put it deeper inside. Hannibal tasted godly when mixed with the coppery flavour of his blood. "You are delicious, Hannibal," he spoke amused when he eventually pulled out the cock with an obscenely loud noise.

Will didn't give much thought to the next procedure, he just went through with it, hoping for the best reaction to come. He started rubbing the slick, silvery surface of the knife against Hannibal's now extremely swollen dick, fully aware of how hot and twisted it truly was, also how dangerous to expose one of the most fragile parts of the body to such a danger. Will couldn't stop himself though when he heard the weak, begging whispers, and then Hannibal's eyes got all misty, his expression tensed and jaws tightened with visible need to come. He likes it, Will thought to himself surprised, having a hard time believing that Hannibal entrusted his own body to him in such a profound, intimate way. "Do you want to come like this? With the blade pressed to it?" Will smirked viciously, knowing that he could do whatever he wanted, Hannibal wouldn't stop him. All of this required a
great amount of faith on both sides and it was only now that Will fully comprehended how obsessed they were with each other, how fascinated by each other's everything. Body, mind, heart, soul. Captivated by the art and horror of their own designing. Ready to put each other through the worst hell, eager to initiate the fire and put the other into the flames, but all in all destined to jump into it later for each other's sake to bring salvation and safety. Will would never leave Hannibal without the rain rinsing the wounds clean, water quenching the thirst.

"I beg you, Will, please." Hannibal's voice a frail plea, broken yelps escaping his lips again.

Will fastened the movements, warmed up steel stroking Hannibal along the aching shaft, leaving him hopeless and forced to feel. The tip of his cock was red and leaking, the precome unusually thick. Will leaned in to have a taste, then sucked it and started licking the vulnerable skin at the head of Hannibal's hilt. When he sensed the muscles fixing, a big vein pulsing dangerously inside the cock, he pulled the blade away, as well as his wet lips, already sticky with fluid. Hannibal actually screamed out, body tensing and hips jerking desperately as if it was going to help his condition at all. "Well, it doesn't feel that nice to be denied the final pleasure, does it?"

Hannibal bared his teeth and put a wicked smile on his lips. "It is an exquisite gift." Will put the pressure of his whole body on Hannibal, getting down on him and rolled his hips to rub against the other man in a forceful, punishing manner. "Let me feel the sweet, pure wrath of yours, and I will take it all for as long as it delights you."

Will frowned at the words, feeling the deep, murky tide of honesty drowning him into excitement. "I am your lamb only, Hannibal. I will bring you anything you need," he whispered softly, gentleness slipping in. "I want to make love to you now, and wash you clean with my touch." Hannibal held breath in his lungs, stunned for a second, but he looked Will in the eyes eventually. "May I do that for you?"

"Yes," the older man replied right away in a hoarse voice, and he knew he wouldn't deny Will anything, yet he didn't expect him to ask for the permission. "It's your chance for reciprocity, William. You don't have to hold back. I am you and you are me, and there's nothing left to separate."

Will furrowed his brows, leaning in for the kiss, claiming Hannibal's numb mouth roughly until they both gasped, exhausted. "I think you misunderstood me. I'm not going to ravish your body and put violence upon you, no, that's not for today." Will smiled faintly, seeing the other man's confusion. "I will kill you with kindness instead. But first, you need to tell me where you keep the lube."

"What makes you think that I even own any?" Will smirked at the remark, Hannibal's expression growing amused.

"I know you do, you're unbelievable after all," he whispered back, looking expectantly.

"I see, my reputation precedes me," Hannibal breathed out the words in a low chuckle. "Bathroom, next door on the left. It's somewhere in the drawers above the sink." When Will wanted to leave, Hannibal gripped his hand tight. "But you don't have to use it, Will, I can handle anything you want me to."

Will's eyes narrowed as he titled his head. "I'm not going to hurt you."

"I didn't prepare you yesterday." Hannibal's voice held the heavy weight of guilt. 

"It doesn't matter," Will said. "It's not the equality I ask for right now. I need you to feel good, is this okay with you?" Will snapped, tone a little too harsh for his own liking. "I want this so badly..." He tried again, hot lips kissing Hannibal's cheek, the salty taste of skin driving him crazy, the feeling of
intense intimacy spreading.

"I'm sorry," Hannibal let out quietly, eyes fluttering closed.

"Wait," Will commanded softly, moving away from Hannibal, then getting out of the bed. "And don't even think about moving or touching yourself. I want you to stay completely still."

So Hannibal listened, holding back every natural urge he had in that moment to roll his hips or palm himself with his free hands, his fully hard and neglected cock already wet. He waited for his boy to come and bring him the pleasure as he knew he would. His heart had never beaten faster.

*Come back quickly, you are my guiding light.*
"Kingdom Of Welcome Addiction" by IAMX

Your taunted charm and your broken smile  
Touched me unexpectedly

So long, so long you've waited in line  
Desire is a gift in life  
So long, so long you've left and arrived  
It's time for you to stay a while

If you chose life, you know what the fear is like if...  
You welcome addiction, this is your kingdom

Your fight for power  
For memories, answers and signs  
Will bring you through the dark to light  
Clear and redefined

Hard angles of muscles and soft lines of pale skin, silently missing the golden evidence of sunlight washing over it, filled Hannibal's world, narrowing it down to an unwavering depth of blue waters, piercing through his skull with a pure intention to cleanse, embrace of it tight and purposeful.

Am I being baptised by the kindred spirit, the holy light stepping in, seeping through me, Will?

As the brunet toppled forward, hands locked on either side of his head, Hannibal let out a faint sigh, wild hunger and stirred aching slipping into his insides, into his being, nagging and gnawing at him. He swallowed hard, chest rising and falling fast, when he felt a wet, cooling sensation near his perineum. A slick finger poked in, stretching him. It wasn't long enough before two more fingers entered his body as well, scissoring, and Hannibal smelled the very distinct need radiating from Will as he continued the circular, swirling movements, encrusted with silver tenderness of the moon, rocking and cradling the ocean waves; suffused with a teasing craving for curious exploration. Eager fingers searched through him ponderously, a bit rigid, not hurried though. Every nerve in his body tensed, holding a heavy weight of data, floating into his brain and back with the speed of light. The road to pleasure stretching behind the screen of his mind as the rocking motion continued. Hannibal saw bright colours when his eyes rolled into his head, mouth giving out a small, pitiful proof of joy and pain alike. His raspy voice was a testament of the worst longing and his face broken in sweat shown fearful anticipation for a rare scission to come, yet filled with quiet hope that he will be
brought back from the split and gathered together to be whole again in the aftermath. He opened his eyes to see the lithe beauty revealed in front of him.

"God, don't look at me like that." A startled whisper cut the air in a swing of invisible wings.

"How, W-will?"

"You know how." **Like I'm a piece of art, worthy of your admiration.**

Hannibal cried out in a weak voice when the pleasurable tension finally hit his prostate, strong pressure building up, as if wires were inserted into his bones, causing an electrical fire. Unyielding fingers caressed the tight rings of muscles with each stroke, reassuring, intimate, helpful. Will smiled at the noise, the mere sight of the other man, lost in complete bliss, out of control, captured in the prison of kind touches, already taking his breath away.

*Defenceless, soft form that I can mould in my hands...* Will thought, a sense of power and pride taking hold of him. A *cold-blooded, feral creature clothed with a thick cloud of smoke, now under my touch, under my care, only mine to pet...*

Will leaned into a kiss and claimed what was righteously his to take. A hot breath shared, wet tongues encircled around each other. The little dance they did was a healing method of easing the pain; the agony of lonely skin, forever trapped in its shell. A mouth stroked the other mouth in a gesture of solidarity, a mute and shy answer, all-telling *I know*, to every unspoken and unspeakable message ever sent between flesh. Hannibal found little red droplets on his lips, sweet crimson under his tongue, only after the softness had left his mouth, embrace broken.

"Be with me," he heard a gentle command, thrusting fingers withdrawing all at once, leaving his body to an unsettling emptiness.

"I am."

*I am. I am, I am, because you are.*

"I'll make you feel good. Better than you think you deserve." Warm sounds covered the small space between their faces, and filled the maroon eyes with unnamed joy, never discovered before this moment. "And you will take it all... You need it so badly." Will breathed promises into Hannibal's ear. Hot wave burst through the taut body and strained muscles trying not to surrender completely to the raised excitement, then dissolved into the beads of sweat.

"You are being a very arrogant, cocky boy, now aren't you?"

"Yes," the younger man breathed out slowly, tongue licking the salt from Hannibal's cheek. "Because I can. Because your joy is my law tonight."

Hannibal looked up at the man and tilted his head slightly, seeing the clear arousal on his face. "Then, please, make yourself at home."

Will was explicitly hard already. He grabbed the bottle of lube and put more sticky liquid on his fingers and his cock, smearing it thoroughly along the whole length. His eyes were shining in the dark and no more words escaped his mouth.

Hannibal wrapped his legs around Will, squeezing tightly. Hips pushed forward, he rubbed his ass against the sheets, and licked his lips. It was unbelievable how so dangerous man could be this seductive and inviting, forcing his way to be devoured. Will didn't need more signs of acceptance, it was absolute. The older man groaned quietly, sharp breath inhaled, when seconds later he felt Will
inside of him, slowly pushing further, despite the obvious tightness.

"Will..."

The younger man sucked in a lungful of air with a hiss as inexpressible black waves of desire crept in and filled his being with darkness. A deluge of extended yearning and fulfilment brought together in a splash of quick pleasure. His name, repeated few more times in a tentative manner, sounded like a wistful song, the siren call. Malign and baneful, a fatal device grinding his common sense to perdition.

"Do you feel me, Hannibal?" A roaring cry escaped from the older man's throat, fingertips digging into shoulders as Will shoved his cock once again in a single movement, thrusting to bury himself deep to the hilt. Hannibal let out a dry moan, feeling the stirring pressure inside, thick cock driving through tight folds. Will stopped his hips from moving, stilled, when painful expression pinched the older man's face. A loud hissing sound followed, mouth winced slightly and teeth gritting. It stung in the most flaming way and Hannibal felt himself tensing against his will.

"N-now I do," he answered quietly, voice ragged, dark eyes glistening, piercing through Will's skull with heavy intent. "I never knew that I would reach what is unimaginable..." A feral groan ripped out of his chest, ruffled sounds out of control, words unfiltered. "U-until y-you, W-Will. P-please... Move." *Move into me and never leave.*

One ruined expression followed by carelessly spilled words almost sent Will reeling, his dick throbbing in response. Will furrowed his brows, a grimace settling on his face, while he looked down at the man sprawled under, desperately holding onto Will with rigid limbs.

*And I never knew that I would see the beauty in your pleading, naked form, placed in front of me to drink in every little sound in order to nourish the lights and darks of crippling want... Submitted to me as I reap every trembling bone and as I lay bare the abiding devotion held dear in my heart until now, locked away through all those years we've been separated, Hannibal.*

Narrow hips thrust forward, the penetration deepening, passionate, skin smacking with obscene sounds. Hannibal closed his eyes shut, pressing nails into Will's back, trying to pull him closer into suffocating embrace of eagerly squeezing arms and legs. Damp, smoky scent hit Will's nostrils, spreading through him and around him just for a second before disappearing; the alluring fragrance, impossible to pin down, too fleeting to remember or write in The Memory Palace; too intoxicating not to be drawn to it, just like a moth put to a flame.

Will slid into Hannibal's body and kept pounding time after time, soaked in pure desire and hunger, his penis pulsing around thick and warm rings of muscles, tightening to embrace his whole length. It was blissful, crippling, overwhelming with its intensity. With eyes hazed, face contorted in pleasure, Hannibal lifted his hand to stroke Will's cheek. It was burning hot. Will smiled weakly, a volcanic lava spreading inside his lungs. Softness was going to truly undo him, take to pieces until he was reduced to a package of molecules, nothing more.

"You're fucking beautiful, Hannibal." A croaky growl echoed as the younger man leaned in and brought hot lips together into a kiss. He didn't give Hannibal a chance to negotiate with the statement, but he saw the gleaming glance he gave away, unknown emotion flickering in maroon eyes.

With limbs entwined, bodies rubbing against each other, breath coming short, they both felt the last piece of the puzzle coming together. It was a perfect scene, unique communion of flesh, the final seal to their companionship. Will ended the kiss with a slow lick of tongue on the other man's mouth. He pushed his nose into the curve of his neck and inhaled deeply, moving his hips fast, thrusting firmly
until he found the tough spot inside. As he started slamming against the sensitive bundle of nerves, hitting it hard, he heard soft whimpers unfurling from Hannibal's lips.

*Yes, sing for me shamelessly, till you can't breathe, die, but, please, keep singing the death song from the other side.* Will grabbed a pulsing cock, red and leaking, hard as rock. "Don't stop. I want to hear you, loud and c-clear." A relentless pressure and fast stroking sent millions of shivers down Hannibal's spine.

"M-mylimasis!" Hannibal cried out eventually, nails digging into skin violently, body shaking with tremors. Will ignored the pain, hot wave of pleasure taking over him, aching tightness sinking low in his stomach. "Ah, Will, m-my canny b-boy..."

Will chuckled in a low voice, then suddenly slipped out of Hannibal, leaving him empty. "Yours only, I believe." Hannibal watched as the brunet moved away, kneeling on the bed now, eyes locked with him the whole time, unwavering blue entrancing as ever. "Turn over."

Dryness filled Hannibal's mouth. He licked his lips and exhaled deeply. He did as he was told, lying down on his stomach, aching shaft buried in the sheets, swollen and needy.

"You are the lethal remedy. Smoke trapped in my lungs, and with you in me, I breathe truth, I breathe life." A muffled whisper near Hannibal's ear, hot tongue inside, licking, exploring, tasting the salt of skin. Hannibal felt air stuck in him, face flushed, fever enfolding his whole body as Will kissed his neck and shoulder blades with tenderness. Strong arms pulled him back, forcing to kneel, and soon enough he found himself pressed firmly against Will's chest. Only spicy taste of sweaty lust between them.

Oh my lovely Will, the morning star that brings peace and clarity to my existence. Like a smooth sheet of ice, a glistening, transparent surface, reflecting the rays of the sun. Your broken smile touched my unexpectedly.

Gentle mouth marked its road towards Hannibal's neck, wetness corrupting the vulnerable spots. Impatient licks and kisses created an honest love song, writing itself on the sensitive skin. "How could I ever live without it... Now that I know what it feels like," Will murmured quietly, a slurred whisper lost in soft flesh as he bit Hannibal's shoulder, tongue sharp, lips tender. He clenched down his fingers on peaking hips beneath his grip, putting strong pressure, and pushed his hard cock deep into the inviting hotness, groaning in a low voice. He slammed fast, pace unrelenting, movements hard, this time violent. Hannibal moaned, spine arching, head thrown back, red cheek leaning against Will's. He found something to hold onto as he squeezed Will's waist lustily, hands reaching and stretching. An upper lip curled up, eyes narrowed, pleasure and pain undistinguished.

Will looked at him, mouth slightly open, breath coming short. "I *see* you, Hannibal." He put his hand on the other man's chest, his touch meant to both hold tightly and caress gently. He felt the wild heartbeat, blood pumping beneath the skin, and it excited him dearly that he was the reason why it was beating so fast. The other hand shifted from Hannibal's hips to grope the leaking mess. Will squeezed heavy balls, pressing his prodding fingers. *You can't hide from my sight, can't use masks to deceive me, to test me. Not anymore, not ever again. I won't let you. I won't ever reject you.* "You're safe now." A nameless sensation forced Hannibal's stomach to flutter at the mere sound of the intimate whispering.

With another series of deep thrusts, pace deliberately changed, now painfully slow to soon become a sweet torture, pulsing gland hit every time with precision, and fingers wrapped hard around his throbbing erection, Hannibal felt it all, body jolting, his voice hoarse and ragged while he kept whimpering, and as he was losing the battle to remain any beats of control, Will pushed him further to the edge, kissing his face all over. He put the caressing palm around his throat, stroking gently to
calm his nerves, but it was way too late for the silence.

"Will, please... Don't make me b-beg," Hannibal whispered, breathless, on the verge of giving up. He pressed his mouth together in a thin line, brows furrowed. "Because I c-certainly will..."

Will only smirked, a hot breath near the pleading lips. "I won't. I don't want you to beg for anything tonight." A dark desire coated his voice, tone dropping few octaves. He pushed forward, ramming in a slick hole again and again, leaking precome, as Hannibal instinctively moved his hips as well to have Will's presence deeper inside of him. "I want to give you everything you need." Just as you gave me everything I didn't know I needed.

Hannibal cried out loudly, his body giving up, the tension sinking low and heavy in his stomach, pleasure hitting his cock and groin. He was so close, he knew that. Shivers ran through the back of his head, spreading wide up to his toes. "I-I... Will... T-tave myliu, Will!"

If you dive into me, I will dive into you in return.

They both panted heavily, bodies slamming, rocking against each other, covered in sweat. Will's cock pulsed from base to tip, red balls slapping against the back of Hannibal's thighs with a clear sound. Will sped up the movements, white vision behind his eyes, and crashed his mouth against Hannibal's, kissing him roughly as he came with a muffled yelp. The hotness spilled inside of him, pleasure strong, yet he didn't stop touching the other man, palming him ferociously to help him reach the climax.

Hannibal let out a small, strained growl when he released himself all over Will's hand. "F-fu..." The older man bit down the curse, then swallowed hard as forceful movements continued, still working him through his orgasm.

"Yeah, fuck indeed," the younger man admitted, out of breath, smiling cheekily. He leaned in to kiss wet skin on Hannibal's neck, then licked his throat in a slow manner. The smell of sex hit him, warmth and exhaustion filling his body, head a bit hazy in this particularly pleasant way, like it'd been drained from all the heaviness of agonising thoughts. Only empty, peaceful, white silence remained.

Hannibal felt his sore, overstimulated muscles, skin now highly sensitive to the touch. He moaned in a deep voice as Will's lazy kisses shifted to his jaw and chin, kindness unfaltering. "Will... please."

"Will, please what exactly?"

A growling sound echoed. "Oh, this is plain rude, my dear."

"Mmm, maybe..." Will grinned, hands caressing Hannibal's hairy chest, nails digging in a bit. He could feel the dried blood sticking there from the cut. "So what?"

The other man simply leaned over to claim Will's mouth, and kissed him viciously until he was out of breath, giving away small, adorable noises of pleasure and distress. "There'll be consequences, that's what."

Will smiled softly, eyes shining, and licked his own lips slowly like he was savouring the aftertaste of their kiss. "Hm, it doesn't seem all that bad. Being strangled by your mouth, I mean," he said, then leaned in to bite down Hannibal's lower lip, but the other man swiftly moved away from the touch.

"Does it?"

Will stilled for a second, darkness seeping in. He cleared his throat, then slid his softening cock out
of Hannibal. He backed away from the pleasant warmth, and lay down on the bed, his head hitting the pillows. He felt heavy again.

"You were outstanding, Will, just as expected." The younger man heard the gentle compliment, heavy body shifting to eventually lie beside him, dark iris gleaming. Will felt the weight of Hannibal's gaze even without returning the favour. "And you felt... explicit. " You felt like you belonged there, deep inside, ready to open the door and connect with my wicked soul to stay for eternal rest.

"Well, you're welcome, Doctor Lecter," Will teased. A poor attempt to hide sudden awkwardness coming from being praised like that.

"Always happy to have you, Mister Graham." An audacious smirk pinched the older man's face. Will's cheeks flushed red.

You insolent bastard, thought the brunet as he stared deep into the other man's eyes. In a quickened motion, limbs lashing out, Will leaned over to capture the smiling lips, pulling Hannibal into the kiss. A numbness corrupted his senses as he kept devouring swollen mouth, embrace deepening with each violent and forceful stroke. He sat down on Hannibal's stomach, legs clutching hard each side of his waist, holding on. Wet tongues fought each other as they both started panting, impatient hands all over.

"Did you just say something, Will, or am I projecting?" Hannibal hissed out through the kiss, rough touch of eager, needy lips rising dark impulses within, crimson coming to the surface, then subsiding at the back of his head. He wrapped sharp teeth around wriggling muscle and as he bit down on Will's tongue, he heard a hushed, wounded whimper. Blood filled Will's mouth as he backed off, escaping from the next attack.

"You're insane, you're literally asking to be fucked again," he spoke, smiling darkly, then picked up the knife, lying on the bed, completely abandoned. Its cold, silver surface shining and tempting to be put to use. Will looked down at the dried blood in which the blade was covered, and licked sore lips, swallowing the bile in his throat. He could hear his heart pumping fast, pulsing wildly in his ears, excitement growing, the forbidden fruit hanging low and heavy. A golden pendulum swung behind his eyelids, remorseless need echoed time after time until the vision cleared out, focused, and he saw the image of a sharp weapon, hurling and pushing in through the hard folds of tensed muscles, sinking underneath soft skin... Alluring scent of blood and desire in the air, smoke coming off of the other man's broken tissues but much thicker. Tar. Body broken to pieces, silent, as the blade would keep pushing, unforgiving, movements passionate and familiar somehow, close to the memory. So much blood, pure, liquid life essence, sweet offering on the altar of mercy. I could bathe myself in it just to clean my own injuries. Our wounds would blur and become the same, Will thought. The spell had been broken.

Before he woke up from his vision, a strong hand had already wriggled out the knife from his grasp. His body forced to lie down flat on the mattress again when the dark shadow leaned forward to rip him apart. "So much, Hannibal, it hurts so much." A broken sound cut them both. Will yanked away, jerking a bit, as he felt Hannibal's weight fully on him, caging him in place. One hand had squeezed his neck tight, the other pressed the blade to his mouth that was visibly trembling. Like the stupid fool he truly believed himself to be, he leaned into the strangling touch and licked the steel carefully, tracing his tongue from the base to the tip in a slow manner, licking the red stains away. He looked into Hannibal's eyes, gaze soft and vulnerable. "I love you so much," he breathed out a faint whisper, exhale deep, his eyes fluttering closed. Some heavy burden perished from his chest. He felt slightly light-headed. Silence stretched long, relentless.
"William..." Wings of a swallow, trapped in the tiniest of cages. A second later, pressing arms clasped around Will's whole frame, holding him close like a lifeline, steady threat on his neck and reassuring sharpness on his lips gone. "Will." Do not test me, it is considered cruel to ruin a man with such careless words. But please, don't ever stop wrecking me, or I will be damned. "Will..." A name on his lips remained, just like the longing, a bittersweet ambrosia to taste, and it was truly a wordless sentence to speak.
Hannibal woke up early the next morning. The eventful memories of last night burned bright inside of him. He felt love, the undeniable sweetness and comfort of the intimate words spoken yesterday. All of it spreading within the confines of his wicked mind. Making him slightly numb, pleasantly tired.

"What are you going to do to me?" Will asked quietly, voice barely a whisper, snuggling his warm face into the other man's neck. Hannibal didn't react until the shivers took him down when Will wrapped his arms around his torso and closed his eyes with a little sigh escaping his mouth. The embrace was tight and needy. It resonated with a trace of distant loneliness but it was fearless nonetheless. The older man looked at him, the warm presence on his chest more pleasant than anything else in the entire world. His remarkable boy. Recklessly blunt. Blind to his fate. By his side, despite the lethal consequences.

"Everything I wish to do. Any complaints?"

"None, I guess." A lazy smile crossed Will's face. He looked up at Hannibal with sleepy eyes. "Just please, refrain from committing any criminal acts against me while I'm still sleeping. It's not very fair of a fight. You're better than that."

Hannibal smirked. "Don't tempt me, my dear."

"Never." A teasing smile followed the statement. Warm hands tightened around Hannibal's waist, squeezing. Will wouldn't admit it out loud, but in that moment he felt incredibly safe, held so tenderly.

"You're in need of a lesson, I see."
"Noooo. I'm in need of a good and long rest." Will laughed. "Please, let us stay like this a bit longer. Just stay with me."

"Always." In response, Hannibal kissed the boy's forehead. Maybe it was cheap and cheesy to behave this way, foolishly in love, but it certainly didn't feel like it was. Each and every little gesture was rich and honest. "I may have an idea for what to do with you, yet I'm not fully capable of thinking what to do without you, Will."

He didn't get any answer to that. Will had already fallen asleep again, clutching at him. That blissful moment in all the chaos of space and time seemed like an undeserved miracle.

***

Six months had passed quickly for Will and before he knew it he fell in love with the steady pressure of cosy darkness sitting on his shoulders. The life with Hannibal was not easy at times, especially when the man got creative or, God forbid, inspirational. Inspiration was the precise source of every action which Hannibal decided to take.

One day, when Will returned home from a fishing trip, he found their whole house in a particularly odd predicament. The door was open wide, wooden surface scratched violently, the handle smeared with fresh blood.

"Hannibal?" Will inquired, and empty rooms answered only with silence. Will tried to calm himself to urge his heartbeat so it would submit to his will, and proceeded forward, having stepped into the kitchen first. It'd always been the right place to start looking when it came to Hannibal.

The kitchen was empty though; no blood there, no voices, not even a shadow of presence. Vicious clocks inside his skull started working quickly, matching trails with different possibilities. Will claimed the predatory demeanour, got his form down, the glistening edge of his fishing knife clung firmly, stern look on his face. He didn't breathe out the name again, he sensed it wouldn't do much good for him, and instead, it could betray his position or emotion carried with the words denounced.

Deep down he knew someone was in the house, and because of that hunch his bones quaked a bit with each step he took. Will looked at the door behind the kitchen. The basement.

Tempting invitation. Quite a good place to play hide and seek, Will thought to himself. A deep noise of creaking door welcomed him home when he squeezed the handle. There wasn't any blood on it but it felt somewhat sticky. Will furrowed his brows, then stepped into the darkness. He hesitated when turning on the lights. Brightness blinded him for a second, the colour of the light uncomfortable; cold white unpleasantly irradiating his eyes until he managed to adjust to its power.

Sight is not the most primal of senses - smell and taste, those are the directions for a wild beast trying to thrive in the dark forest. Before he could even smell it, Will felt the specific taste under his tongue. Bitterness with a pinch of impolite incredulity.

An inconvenient guest?

"Who is this?" A thick, unknown voice echoed, urgency and sharp anger blasting through the stressed consonants. A bit of fear, hidden underneath, barely detectable. Will stepped off the stairs, looked around the large space of the basement which had the form of a surgery room more than of a storage facility. It served both purposes actually, and it was quite convenient.

"Well, I'm the landlord. The question is... what are you?" Will asked, having turned on his feet to face the other way, under the stairs, where he could see that in the corner of the room sat the stranger:
white male, maybe around his thirties, medium build, black hair. The foreign element to the puzzle. Will frowned in a quick moment of bewilderment. "Have you got lost on your way?"

"I might have." A smug smile pinched the stranger's face. "But then I was so kindly asked to stay over that I just didn't have it in me to refuse the offer." Will smiled back knowingly, having come closer to the chair where the man had been placed, displayed, his whole body wrapped in a plastic film and strapped tight to the furniture. Now Will could take a better look and focus on the fact that he was completely naked, only dressed in thick layers of bindings.

"Of course, it would be terribly awful to refuse the kindness in such circumstances." Will admitted approvingly, a soft sigh on his lips, eyes watchful. He stood there, just looking at the caught creature and admiring the posture, the simple design, nagging hunger suddenly brought close to the surface. "On the other hand, it is considered quite rude to leave the guest without the proper welcoming. Where is hospitality in behaviour like this?"

The man laughed bitterly, eyes narrowing. "There was some hospitality involved, believe me. And now you are here. So I only assume you're even more gifted when it comes to it."

Will's breath sharpened, he grabbed the brunet's chin and brought his face close to his. "What did you do? To earn the privilege of sitting here?" An amused smirk crossed his lips.

"You tell me."

"I will. In a moment, I just need to think about your sins." Personify them. Become them. Will drew back, then walked up to the metallic drawers and shelves in the other corner, searching for the specific tools that he'd been using to have nice and eloquent conversations with all of his basement guests. While doing so, he laid eyes on a small package in the first drawer he opened. There was a syringe filled with some liquid, a small remote and a piece of newspaper. Then he noticed there were also some pictures at the bottom of the locker and a handwritten note. Hannibal's note.

Will gave a quick look at the man to scrutinise his state and face expression. He didn't show any reaction to Will's presence beyond slight irritation which was pretty mutual feeling. He took the note in his hands and read it.

Mylimasis, My Dearest Boy,

I have left a present for you to unwrap. You may do as you see fit, according to you liking. Be careful - it does not bark, but it may bite hard. Unfortunately, I cannot be there with you to cherish the moment since I am in a bit of a hurry.

You are the incomprehensible incarnation of lethal beauty. Do not forget that.

Yours only,

H. L.

Will's cheeks flushed red while reading the end note. Still, he immediately felt that something odd and not fitting had been painted into the pretty, chanting words, cursing them with demented foreshadowing. As if one of the strings broke down in the instrument while it was still being played. Will read it three times to find out what was sticking out, which words were the imposers, but he couldn't find fault in any of them. Distracted with unnamed, shapeless emotions, distress settling in his chest, then in his guts, he took the next item, judging what it could possibly be. The remote looked like it could be used for the projector, some sort of mobile emitter, just like the one he'd used when he'd been teaching at the FBI academy in his long gone past. There were no instructions
whatsoever, just the note, for some reason upsetting Will. He grabbed the photos and some pieces of the article left in the drawer, and looked for any useful information.

It didn't take long to figure out the whole truth. And when Will did, he was not in the mood to search for any hidden directions. "Verron Briddington. The child of the founder of Grand&Grant Charity. Your father's organisation has been improving greatly as of lately. Is that you?" Will stated, showing one of the pictures to the bounded brunet. "Must be hard, huh? Being the younger son, all of that family drama, neglect and downright humiliation of never being enough."

"You won't provoke me," the other man spat out in a harsh tone. "How did you find me? Are you a couple of psychos working together, spying on my family? Are you some kind of... contract killers? Who are you working for?"

Will gazed into the younger man's eyes deeply, looking for answers; looking for monsters lurking, peeking through the split to enter the world. "We don't work for people. Any people," he said calmly. "We only work for ourselves." And for each other. "I didn't look for you, I just found you. Given to me, packed as a precious gift, Mr Briddington."

"I'm not a pet."

"Oh no, of course you're not." Will smiled mildly, slight amusement and mockery giving birth to words. "Pets are way much more adorable. You are..." Will set the photos aside, last one making him wince visibly. He bared his teeth, leaning over the man, face drawn dangerously close. "Filthy."

With the hiss as a warning, Will slammed his fist right into the man's stomach, then slapped his face hard. "You like the charity work very much, don't you? Does it make you happy and excited?"

The brunet started coughing, not able to speak up for a moment. "T-thrilled, actually." He exposed his teeth, putting the lips into an ugly smile. "Those kids, you know, they need my guiding hand. What a man would I be without a good old compassion for the poor?"

Will huffed. "Yes, indeed. What a man." A heavy boot struck a corner of the chair and a few seconds after that the young man yelped, having fallen down onto the cold floor, all tied up neatly, writhing helplessly. "You do not deserve that title. A man is a totally different creature than you. You are at the bottom of the list. The lowest in the rank. And I will make sure you stay there." Will leaned in, pulling the other man's hair violently, with fully realised intend to bruise and bring destruction upon each and every part of the body he was holding captive now. "Six. Feet. Under." He let out a hot breath close to his victim's ear, hissing in a deep voice. "Nobody will ever find you. There's not going to be anything to find. See, here in this house, there are rules to follow," he said, pulling his flick-knife from the pocket, opening it and tugging it tight against the unwrapped skin near the man's neck. "First, we don't really like to waste any food."

"Well, I think t-this time... You're going to be disappointed. Since if you want to eat me, you'll have to do it alone." Red hotness blot out Will's vision, his mind went black and empty, then a nagging rush of a panic flooded his veins, anticipation and fear fighting with common sense. "The Lithuanian guy was taken right after he'd been finished with me."

"Taken by whom?" A squealing sound lost in burning lungs, Will's voice a broken whisper; quiet, clattering wings in the air.

The other man's face brightened, vicious smile pinned to his lips. "Oh, what is it? Having a tough time digesting the news?"

Will did not listen, though. His eyes unseeing, unfocused, vision blackened, pulse pumping in his chest and in his head. The stillness of his body was evident, and it took a while before he gathered
himself but eventually he did, looking in the direction of the drawers; thinking of the syringe he'd found minutes ago. "I think it is time for you to stop smiling and give me the names." A hoarse voice echoed through the walls, and Will heard himself inside his mind. Right now showing the emotions wasn't a wise choice to make. He withdrew from the strong flow of raging, rubbed sensations and forced himself to be calm, hands steady, only then did he unwrap the man's left hand, cutting with knife carelessly, not interested in the consequences. Soon enough, after some light resistance and a few protest sounds, he injected the unknown substance into the man's vein, and waited for the response to surprise him as well as his victim. "The names, Verron, before I go impatient."

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A muffled sound broke the silence. Damp hair shining with beads of sweat, muscles strained under the plastic wrap tightened around the exhausted body. Red stains were covering the plastic, marking its soft surface with a memory of exquisite wrath brought upon now ever so obedient flesh. The man was sitting in the chair, gasping, voice coarse and worn out.

"Please, make it stop." A weak plea encrusted the darkened space with a strong image of humiliation and surrender. Heaved breath trapped inside the lungs when suddenly the buzzing noise came to life again, strong electricity running through the muscle tissues, and hitting hard the neurons. The brunet laid his eyes on the silver remote controller located a few inches from where he was; almost in his grasp, the possibility of ending the suffering close but not close enough. Unbearably unattainable.

Will wasn't there to hear the pleading and to finish the torment. He wasn't there to provide further care either. He was on his way to a farm located about one hour away from where Hannibal and he lived. Squeezing the steering wheel in his hands, touch forceful, full of purpose, he indulged in the vision coming up for air in the black waters of his mind.

"I gave you many gifts of all sorts." Suffocating dust filled the imagery, soft voice pouring from different directions like liquor spilled on the wounds to purify. "I've got nothing else to offer but watch your joy, the beauty unfurled."

"Don't go." A broken veil of clouded need. "Your vanished presence would leave me with barely a pretence of living. Don't stop, don't go where I cannot follow."

"Again and again, even though we know love's landscape... And the little churchyard with its lamenting names. And the terrible reticent gorge in which the others end..." A bitter-sweet smile erupted within the warm whispering, eyes watering in a defile attempt to wash themselves from heavy emotion. "... Again and again the two of us walk out together under the ancient trees... Lay ourselves down again and again among the flowers, and look up into the sky."

"Even though we know love's landscape." The other voice muttered roughly, repeating the incantations of the baleful poetry.

"The purity of suffering in love and charming simplicity of the joy when it comes to love's image in this particular poem has never been lost on me, Will. I believe I have a soft spot for Rilke's writing. It's unique."

"I have a soft spot for your admiration," Will replied shyly, and smiled. "Or for you in general. I always will."

"Hold onto that promise, my beautiful boy. Sometimes that is all we have left. Our words to keep." Suddenly, the loud whistling interrupted, abrupt, unwanted ending. A quick shooting sound followed after.
Will returned to his senses. Eyes fogged, welled up with salty tears, hands shaking a bit. He tried to concentrate on the road, and only that.

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