Will is breathing heavily, shivering with pain, with ecstasy. "Eat it raw," he breathes. "I want to watch."

"Hannibal?"

Will waits until he feels Hannibal's gaze upon him, fever-bright in the soft, golden fire-glow of the room. He has an arm slung across his eyes, because the weight of it is helping to calm his spinning head, and he lifts his wrist to peek beneath it, so he can blink over at Hannibal. Make sure his attention is caught.

He smiles, tilts his head to a semi-roll, shoulder to the couch, sprawled out in a chaotic, decadent mess of lines and the single blanket he'd brought from the outside, where he had been enjoying his whiskey and solitude. He's drunk, now, or at least halfway there, and his empty glass sits abandoned on the coffee table behind his head.

"Yes?" Hannibal replies, in the wake of Will's long, hunting-cat silence. Will rolls to his stomach with a huff, slides a thigh forward so one knee hangs off the edge, pretends he will push himself upright but changes his mind, going lax again.

He closes his eyes, and asks; "Who was the first guy you ever fucked?"
Hannibal's gaze does not waver, and when Will turns and looks at him through his lashes, he finds neither surprise, amusement, nor distaste on his face. Hannibal is stone, unbroken and uncrackable — but not unfriendly.

He blinks, and his lips purse, eyes lifting up and away into the vast cavern of his memory. While he's searching, Will rises, and takes his wine glass from his side table, refills it from the bottle by the window, and hands it back to him. He takes the whiskey bottle from the table and sets it beside his glass, unsteady-leaning but upright enough.

He pours himself four fingers, and sips at it.

"I think," Hannibal murmurs, and Will's eyes snap to his. "It was when I was seventeen."

Will tilts his head, rests his elbow upon his knee, his chin in his palm. His other elbow connects to the hand holding his whiskey, rests on his other knee, and he angles himself inward, the ticking clock always, always, turning around the center. Hannibal, every tock, that reverberates in Will's chest with his heartbeat.

"His name was Archibald Simmons," Hannibal adds. "He insisted that I call him 'Archie'."

Will presses his lips together, and swallows down the bitterness he feels welling in his mouth with more whiskey. Hannibal's face is a stone mask, lost in yesteryear, but his tone is soft and Will knows that wherever this 'Archie' fellow lingers in Hannibal's memory palace, it is a comfortable and fond place. Will fights the urge to hunt him down within it, and skin him alive.

"What did he look like?" he asks. He doesn't know why he asks — he's not sure he wants to know. Will knows with utmost certainty he can hate someone he's never met, he used to do it all the time, and he doesn't need another name on his imaginary list of people he would do terrible things to.

Hannibal sits back in his chair, raises his glass to his lips, and drinks. Will does the same, mirroring him as Hannibal folds one leg over the other, tapping his fingers around his raised knee, and sighs.

He sets his glass on the armrest, and idly spins it by the stem.

"Why do you ask?" he murmurs.

"I don't know," Will replies. He drinks whiskey to gentle his teeth. "I suppose I want to know how I measure up."

"You are incomparable," Hannibal breathes, and meets his eyes.

Will grins. "That's not necessarily a good thing."

Hannibal smiles, shoulders lifting and falling in a gentle huff. "Will, darling, do I seem like the kind of man to submit to sub-par performances, or allow continued displeasure on an act that is so-easily improved?"

Will tilts his head. "No," he murmurs, and catches what Hannibal doesn't say. "Not anymore."

Hannibal's eyes grow dark and flat, an endless pool hiding every deed and sin he has ever committed, every spark of joy, every song and dance, manipulation and design. He sighs, and looks down at his wine. It's a red, and in the firelight appears as black as his eyes.

"I loved him, I suppose," he confesses. "In that way teenagers love older men."
"Recklessly?" Will says.

"Unbalanced," Hannibal answers with a nod. "For a time I simply thought that was how it was – my mother and father, in my memory, were not overly affectionate with each other. It was an arranged marriage, you understand; those were still popular in their youth. I fooled myself into thinking that was simply how things would be, that there is always one party more invested, who is enjoying the shared intimacy more fully than the other."

Will shakes his head, and hides his smile into his drink. "I can't imagine that."

"Yes, well." Hannibal smiles at him, wide and teasing, "Can you say you are the same man you were at seventeen?"

Will lifts his glass, acknowledging that with a lazy salute.

Hannibal's head tilts. He breathes in, and drums the fingers of his free hand on his knee. "He was tall," he murmurs, and Will takes another drink, finishing his glass, and pours himself another. "Blond. Pretty, in that magazine cover kind of way. The kind of man you would expect to be the CEO of some large company. Impeccably dressed at all times." His lips purse. "Skinny."

Will smiles. "Did he taste good?"

"Yes," Hannibal murmurs, a soft exhale lingering on after the word. His fingers drum again, and he takes a sip of his wine.

Will hums, lashes low. "Better than me?"

"I don't know," Hannibal says. "I have never tasted you the way I tasted him."

Will frowns, and tilts his head.

"Archie was a man of…a singular mind," Hannibal explains slowly. "He put me on my knees often, but never finished there." His eyes are dark, lost to memory again, and Will finishes his glass, sucks in a breath through his teeth, and sets the tumbler down with a heavy thud.

He rises, and Hannibal watches him, impassive stone cracking as Will prowls closer.

"I regret asking, now," Will says. Hannibal sets his wine glass down on the side table, unfolds his legs and reaches for Will, aborts the movement half-way when Will stops too far away to touch. "I don't know what I hoped to accomplish, but you're not giving me what I want."

"Would you rather I lied?" Hannibal asks, tilting his head. "Told you that there was no pleasure in my past lovers, that there was no other, before you?"

Will shakes his head, hisses again. His vision is clouded as though encased in smoke, his head heavy with alcohol, thrumming golden and thick on the back of his tongue. His mouth feels too empty, his teeth too sharp.

He steps up between Hannibal's knees, and sinks to his own, sighing when Hannibal's hand cradles his jaw. He turns his head, nuzzles into it, smelling paper and wine and the cologne Hannibal wears on his wrists and neck – a Pavlovian thing, he only wears it when he wants Will to come to him. It's a heavy scent, reminiscent of thick syrup and sweet dessert, makes Will's mouth go dry.

He sets his cheek on Hannibal's thigh, his head too heavy for his neck to hold it, and tilts his gaze up, looks at Hannibal from beneath low lids and curling hair. Hannibal brushes his curls away, so Will
can see him clearly.

"Sometimes," he rasps, "I wish what he gave you was the kind of thing a man could give more than once. That I could fill you here." His hand slides up, rests on Hannibal's stomach. He sighs again, nuzzles the space between the spread of his fingers as Hannibal's gut tenses, his thighs quake, and spread farther to make room. "Sometimes I want it so badly it feels like I'm already dead."

Hannibal sits up, abruptly, and leans forward so he can cup Will's face. He brings Will up, angles him for a kiss that is passionate and deep, Will's lips parting to allow him to taste the whiskey lingering on Will's tongue. Hannibal's mouth is soft, always, even his teeth when he bites gently at Will's lower lip.

Hannibal's head tilts, so he can deepen their kiss, and when he pulls back his eyes are still black, but there are monsters beneath the surface of the lake now, stirring, hungry. "Just a piece," Will breathes. "Any part you want; it's yours."

Hannibal smiles at him, wide and showing all of his dangerous teeth. Will shivers, his free hand clenching on Hannibal's thigh, eager. Hannibal wraps a hand in Will's hair, pulls him back, and stands. He tugs Will gently to his feet, and leads him out of the study, to the dining room.

He kisses Will again, deep and wanting, and angles Will so his thighs hit the strong table. He pushes, and Will sits on it, spreading his legs so that Hannibal can press closer. Hannibal shivers, as they part for air, and brushes his fingers feather-light down each side of Will's neck.

He tilts his head, considering, and says, "Take off your shirt."

Will obeys, unbuttoning his shirt and shrugging it off his shoulders, revealing his scarred flesh. The wide smile, on his belly, the bullet wounds and scar tissue around the stab wound in his shoulder. The old purple mark where the compound fracture split his inner elbow during the fall.

Hannibal's hand flattens, wide and warm, on his stomach, and his entire body shivers with emotion – what it is, Will cannot say, for there are too many to name; old sorrow, for the memories that night holds; pleasure, to have marked Will in this way; pride, that Will doesn't hide it, that Hannibal was able to sew their love so deeply that it feels as much a part of Will as his scars.

"Lie back and wait for me," Hannibal murmurs, and Will obeys with another shiver, prostrate on his back as Hannibal pets through his hair, and then disappears into the kitchen. He emerges a moment later, with a bowl of water, a large knife, a towel, and his surgical kit.

He folds the towel and eases it beneath Will's back, spread out wide along the table so it frames his side. Will tilts his head as Hannibal pets him, and opens the surgical kit, rubbing a sterilizing cloth over the knife. Will's breath catches, for now Hannibal's eyes shine, glinting golden to match the light catching on the blade.

"Where will you cut?" he whispers.

Hannibal does not hesitate. He reaches forward, and sets his palm over one of Will's ribs. The flesh here is firm, strengthened by bone. Will's breath catches, chest heaving in offering, and Hannibal's fingers curl.

"It will hurt," he says. He promises it will.

Will wraps a hand around his, and nods. "I know. It's okay."

Hannibal smiles, breathless now, flushed with anticipation. He sets the knife down, and threads a
needle, setting it beside the bowl of water to make use of after he has taken his piece. Beneath the bowl is a small metal dish, that he removes, and sets to one side. For the harvest.

Will's heart kickstarts in his chest, but not out of fear. He wants it more than he wants to breathe.

Hannibal keeps his promise – the knife slices cleanly beneath Will's rib, blood welling up immediately, thinned by whiskey. Will moans, refusing to close his eyes as he watches Hannibal work, watches the sharp focus overtake his face. He is not stone, anymore, but molten iron, eager to burn his prey. He draws the knife from the center of Will's chest to his flank, blood stinging as it pools and drips onto the towel.

Will shudders, trembling in pain as he cuts a second time, an inch above, lining out the piece he wishes to take. Hannibal's fingers, strong and deft and so capable, peel back his skin as he slices it away, creating a 'V' on Will's chest of bared, red flesh. He has another tool, shaped like a scoop, and fits it into the tip of the 'V', gently peeling back the line of meat encasing Will's rib, until bone is revealed.

Will gasps, growling softly, jaw clenched. Hannibal meets his eyes, and gives him a gentle smile, and cuts the strip of flesh free, setting it in the metal dish. Then, he washes his hands in the bowl of water, takes up the needle and thread, and begins to sew the extra skin back into place. Each pinprick stings terribly, and Will is beginning to sweat, juddering and twitching as he fights to stay still.

"Almost done, darling," Hannibal whispers, his hands smeared with blood, his nostrils flared. Will nods, swallowing back a whimper – Hannibal is efficient, but with this he lingers, drawing the thread taut before threading the needle through again, creating an in and out of neat, tiny stitches through the cuts he made.

He ties off the end at the tip of the 'V', and uses the knife to slice it, before he pulls out a wad of gauze and tape from the surgical kit and binds Will's wound. His hands shake, now, overwhelmed at Will's offering.

Will is breathing heavily, shivering with pain, with ecstasy. "Eat it raw," he breathes. "I want to watch."

Hannibal's nostrils flare, and, as though unable to help himself, he cups Will's face and kisses him raggedly, breathing as hard as Will is. Will's own blood smears across his jaw, his cheeks, as Hannibal pets beneath his heavy eyes and kisses him until he's robbed for air. Every breath aches, every thud of his heart brings with it more pain – a reminder, sharp and young, of just how much Will loves him.

He parts from Will, and takes the strip of meat he cut away. Admires it, for marbling or redness or whatever it is he seeks from his kill.

He meets Will's eyes, and takes a bite, and Will wants to thrash, for he thinks that the meat is still a part of him, that Hannibal took his bite fresh and raw. Blood wells up around Hannibal's teeth, staining his lips – he didn't take much, and within three more bites it is gone, but when Hannibal is finished, he looks as shaken as Will feels, flushed and fine and ravenous for more.

Will licks his lips, and whispers; "How do I measure up?"

Hannibal's eyes are wide and watery. He blows out a heavy breath, looks down, and carefully lifts the towel, wiping gently at the beading blood around the stitches.

"You are…"
"Incomparable?" Will says, laughing, though it aches.

"Undoubtedly," he replies. His hands still, and curl, and he looks at Will again.

"Kiss me," Will murmurs, and Hannibal answers him eagerly, letting Will taste the blood and flesh still clinging to his teeth. He groans into the kiss, winces as his ribcage seizes and spasms with the need for air, sending another sharp ache through his body. He clings to Hannibal desperately, gasping when Hannibal withdraws, and nuzzles his sweaty hair.

Will pushes himself upright, hissing a breath, his head swimming from drunkenness and pain, his lungs seizing, his side hurting terribly. Hannibal helps him sit, and moves all the gear so he can swing his legs over. Will pushes himself from the table and falls to his knees at Hannibal's feet.

"My turn," he growls, pawing at Hannibal's clothes. His fingers shake and Hannibal threads a hand through his hair, shakes his head.

"Darling -" 

"No," Will hisses, and looks up, gripping Hannibal tightly so he can't move away. "Give me this."

Hannibal shivers, nods, and helps Will unfasten his suit pants, push them down along with his underwear to his thighs. Despite his protests, he's half-hard, and swells to fullness as Will ducks his head, parts his lips, and sucks the head of Hannibal's cock into his mouth. He's dizzy, and weak, and wanting, his mouth wet as he forces his head down until his nose touches Hannibal's pubic hair, choking himself on Hannibal's cock.

Hannibal snarls, and grips him tighter, for he knows how Will likes to take it. His hips roll smoothly, strong, pulling back so Will can breathe and thrusting forward so that Will's mouth, his throat, is clogged and flooded. Full, to the brim, Will wants it. He needs it more than he needs to breathe – wants it so badly he feels like he might die.

Hannibal's hands smell of Will's blood, he's smearing it through Will's hair and over his face and neck, and Will cups his wound and presses, groaning and gagging around Hannibal's cock as Hannibal snarls, and grips his hair, pressing in as deep as he can. His cock twitches, thickens further, and he comes with a low moan of Will's name, straight down his throat, warm and thick.

He pulls back and Will coughs, unable to keep it in. He bows forward, groaning softly, and digs his nails around the stitches as a thick wad of Hannibal's come and his saliva pools behind his teeth, dripping from his mouth. Hannibal crouches down in front of him, hands turning gentle, both of them completely out of breath.

Will tilts his head up, lunges for a kiss, sharing come and blood, flesh and spit, between them. He paws at Hannibal's nape, refusing to let him go, for he loves how his chest flexes and shudders beneath his hand, loves how much it hurts. Loves the taste of his own blood in Hannibal's mouth.

By the time Hannibal ends the kiss, Will is lightheaded and lighthearted, swimming in a place gold and black. He whimpers, gritting his teeth, and blinks so that Hannibal can see his tears well and spill, cold on his red cheeks.

Hannibal kisses them away. He breathes out, eyes shining, as Will meets his gaze.

"I..."

Will smiles. He thoroughly enjoys rendering Hannibal speechless. He gentles his hand, leans in, and kisses Hannibal once more, chaste and soft – tender, as he knows now that none of Hannibal's lovers
have kissed him before. No one has given him this.

He smiles. "Does Archie have a room in your memory palace?" he murmurs.


"Destroy it," Will commands. "Make it mine, instead."

"My love, your place in my mind is vast, and touches everything. Every thought, every memory, stands as if a mirror to your greatness, and I find it all lacking."

"Destroy it," Will says again. "All of it. Think only of me, love and remember only me, until the day you die."

Hannibal sighs, but he is smiling. "It will take time," he whispers. "But I will do it."

Will nods, grinning wide and so in love, and kisses him again.

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