The Beast awakens
by Silvaxus

Summary

Hannibal was surprised when he got a call from Jack Crawford to consult on a new case. Will had been released from his imprisonment at the BSHCI weeks ago, and Hannibal thought that he went right back to do what he does best, being the FBI’s bloodhound.

However, things changed and while Hannibal was prepared for a change in their dance, he wasn’t ready for this kind of awakening.

Notes

Hey guys,

finally, my mind cooperated again but SPN wasn’t on the menu but our beloved murder husbands :D

This started as a one-shot idea but it became so big I split it into several chapters.

As you can see, this story hast 5 chapters and they are already finished on the writing-wise and only editing needs to be done of chapter 3 and the following ones.

Should you find mistakes i missed, you can tell me in the comments should be something major.

Have fun
Silva

See the end of the work for more notes.
Hannibal left his car, parked far away from the fleet of FBI vehicles along the road, and adjusted his scarf. Temperatures had dropped last night, and while there was no fresh snow but everything was covered in a hard shell of white frost.

Passing the masses of FBI agents, Hannibal smiled to himself as he watched the agents part in front of him like a flock of birds in front of the cat.

Jack hadn’t given him any information about the case. He called Hannibal and told him that he was needed at a crime scene what could be one of the Ripper’s doing.

Hannibal knew it couldn’t be the Ripper because he hadn’t hunted in weeks but Jack couldn’t know this. However, Hannibal was more than curious about the scene when Jack thought it could be Ripper himself.

Jack was waiting for Hannibal with a dark and grim expression on his stoic face.

“What’s the case, Jack?”

“Hello, Jack. I have to say; I was surprised to hear from you to consult on a case. I thought Will Graham was fully rehabilitated and would work for you again.”

A muscle in Jack’s face jerked and Hannibal watched Jack grind his teeth so hard that the medical part of Hannibal feared Jack was going to break them.

“Will Graham hasn’t answered his phone since he was released from the BSHCI, hasn’t been seen at the academy and his house empty except for his pack of dogs. I have no idea what he’s doing but I know what he’s not doing; his fucking job.”

How interesting…That was something Hannibal hadn’t been aware of.

He hadn’t been surprised that Will stayed away from him but Hannibal almost counted on the other man’s drive to catch the Chesapeake Ripper and Will couldn’t achieve this without working with the FBI.

Maybe Hannibal had to take a look at Will’s house himself later this day.

“I wasn’t aware that Will stepped down from his position at the academy or your team, Jack.”

The FBI agent huffed and it reminded Hannibal of a bulldog trained to fight.

“He hasn’t. He informed the HR that he’s going to make use of his vacation and sick leave days to “re-collect himself” and vanished the second he left the BSHCI. If you would follow me now, Doctor Lecter, it’s too cold to stay here all day long.”

A friendly yet calculating smile plastered to his face, Hannibal followed Jack who led him to the edge of a sink in the ground and Hannibal blinked at the picture in front of him.

He was aware of Jack talking to him but he merely raised his hand to tell the other he was already working on it.
No wonder Jack, that of this as the Ripper’s work as this scene was beautiful in its horrific design, others would see.

“It looks like a still life, meant to preserve something beautiful even in the clutch of death. *This* is meant to be seen by an audience or someone specific. It symbolizes the rise of the human over the beast or the victory of man about the monster, I would guess. The berries of the rowan tree are a symbol to keep bad spirits and harm away in many Celtic cultures. However, this is not the Ripper’s work, Jack.”

The flash of anger Hannibal saw on Jack’s face told him that he wasn’t happy with Hannibal’s words but he didn’t care about it. There was a detail he needed to be closer to see it properly.

“What makes you think this isn’t the Ripper’s work? You said it yourself this mess is meant to be seen and the Ripper always seeks and audience and attention. According to Zeller and Price, pieces of the man are missing, like the killer had taken trophies, just like the Ripper.”

Hannibal merely glanced at Jack before he returned his gaze on the scene in front of him.

On the opposite side of the sink, the killer had taken time to turn his prey into a piece of art.

The dead man was nude except for a scarf wrapped neatly around his neck. His arms were stretched out and in one hand, he held an elegant knife and in the other, he held several twigs full with rowan berries.

In front of the dead man, a dead stag seemed to be kneeling on the ground with his majestic head lowered like he was offering his antlers, his crown, to the victorious hunter. However, when Hannibal looked at the picture from a different angle, it looked like the stag was using its antlers to gut the human because it was what happened to the man; he had been gutted but Hannibal had to get closer to take a look at this as well.

“You can get closer if you need, Doctor Lecter. Just be careful, the ground is slippery with frost.”

Looking up, Hannibal noticed Zeller kneeling on the ground in a short distance from where Hannibal stood with a camera between his hands.

“You’ve taken all the evidence you need, Mister Zeller?”

The other man nodded without looking up.

“Yes, Doctor Lecter. I’m going to get the rest when we bring everything to the morgue.”

Nodding, Hannibal climbed down into the sink and he could feel old memories rise at the feeling of frost breaking under his feet.

Up close, the picture was even more stunning than from above as Hannibal could see that the man was smiling in death and the smile had a cruel edge to it.

Focusing on the cut made to disembowel the man, Hannibal saw a straight cut, made with a sure hand and a sharp knife, maybe even the one held by the man himself. The organs were spilling out like someone had pulled them out with care and like he had been looking for something specific.

“Did the killer take something from his victim?”
Jack had mentioned something like this but hadn’t offered any details and Zeller was still watching Hannibal through the lens of his camera.

“Yes, Doctor. It looks like the killer took the kidneys and left the rest of the dinner for us. I hope the scarf will tell us something about our victim. The thing looks expensive.”

Not offering a reply, Hannibal focused on the scarf which had caught his attention from the beginning.

The material looked soft even with the thin layer of frost on it but the dark burgundy colour clashed with the white skin of the dead man but the purple seemed to glow between the man’s skin and the cold frost.

Taking a look at Zeller, Hannibal leaned in close and took a deep breath…and found the scent of his own home and his cologne lingering on the scarf.

Now that he found prove for his assumption, Hannibal tried to remember when he last saw this scarf in his wardrobe.

It must have been a couple of days ago, three or four days ago, to be specific, and Hannibal hadn’t any guests at his house during this time.

The killer had been at his house and not only that. He had managed to enter Hannibal’s house and stroll around like others would walk through a museum.

What infuriated Hannibal the most was the fact that he hadn’t been aware of an intruder.

No unknown scent had warned Hannibal about someone disturbing the peace of his house and the killer went even further; he had walked right into Hannibal’s bedroom and he hadn’t noticed it.

Trying to compose himself, Hannibal climbed out of the sink only to find Zeller already waiting for him.

“Found anything?”

More than Hannibal liked to admit.

“Yes, the cut looks like someone with good knowledge of how to handle a blade and maybe the blade used to gut this man is the one held by the victim. However, the scarf won’t tell you anything I’m afraid. I know this kind of work and you won’t find a label or anything on it. This kind of craftsmanship can be found in Europe in small manufactories where everything is handmade and only to a small group of customers. It is sad to see such a wonderful creation getting mistreated like this but it won’t help you find the name of the victim or the killer.”

Zeller blinked at Hannibal like he was trying to understand what he had heard before he answered almost half a minute later.

“You know, sometimes I completely forget that you are actually from Europe and I feel like an uneducated American idiot.”

Smiling, Hannibal pulled the collar of his coat up as the wind was getting stronger and colder.
“There is always time to learn, Miser Zeller.”

The other man only shrugged while taking more pictures of the crime scene and humming a song to himself.

After talking to Jack again, the agent not happy with Hannibal’s explanation that this was not a Ripper scene, Hannibal left and drove back home.

He was fascinated by this killer and his ability to get into Hannibal’s home completely undetected together with the other’s skill to prepare such a magnificent still life.

Hannibal had no doubt that this scene was prepared for him and so the killer was aware that he was working with the FBI to some degree and this could only mean that the killer had been observing him.

Interesting, Hannibal hadn’t been aware that someone had been watching him.

Back at home, another surprise was waiting for Hannibal.

A cooler stood in front of Hannibal’s door with an envelope on it. Moving the stone aside which had been used to keep the envelope in place, Hannibal opened it but couldn’t find any known scents on the paper.

The handwriting was elegant and controlled yet energetic and fluent and resembled Hannibal’s own writing.

“Good Evening Doctor Lecter,

I hope my gift suits your tastes, and I dare to hope we will enjoy one of your famous dinners soon.

“

No signature under the letter, how rude, but Hannibal folded the letter and put it into the inner pocket of his coat before he opened the cooler.

Two perfect kidneys rested inside the cooler and Hannibal had to admit that the gift indeed suited his tastes.
The FBI discovered more bodies and more gifts appeared every time on Hannibal’s doorstep.

Rips, tenderloin, steaks, liver...Hannibal couldn’t have collected them any better than his admirer did, and every gift was accompanied by a new letter. However, the letters were still without a signature, and while Hannibal considered it rude, he wasn’t mad at his admirer.

As much as Hannibal appreciated the gifts and the entertainment caused by the murders, he hated it not knowing who was behind this game because his admirer managed it every single time to leave something at the crime scenes behind that belong to Hannibal but not once was the FBI able to make a connection from this new killer to Hannibal.

Not once was something taken from Hannibal he would miss in his daily life but had to recognize nevertheless when placed at a crime scene.

Good thing that he preferred his clothes custom made and so nothing could lead in his direction.

Hannibal was almost waiting for a new kill with every new week, and the time he had to spend listening to the tedious problems of his patients felt like a waste of time more and more.

Between waiting for his next gift, and the next theft from his home, Hannibal went back to an old habit; reading Tattlecrim.com and whatever Freddie Lounds would find in the sewers of Baltimore.

Like most days, Hannibal found himself bored even by the misfit Freddie would cause among the rich and famous of Baltimore, but today promised to be different.

Today’s story started with a shot of Jack and Hannibal himself at the last crime scene with a lurid headline proclaiming the rise of a new serial killer.

“Still Life Killer is Baltimore's new nightmare.”

The headline, together with the name, surprised Hannibal because so far, he had been the only one calling the crime scenes a still life, but there was more to come than just the headline.

“Baltimore has always been famous for its high numbers of serial killers and a new star is on the rise. The Still Life Killer, named after his tendency to turn his victims into still lives, has been hunting and killing Baltimore’s residents for weeks now.

According to information provided by reliable sources, the Still Life Killer hunts once a week creates what he seems to be ‘art’ and always leaves an expensive piece of clothing behind.

So far, the FBI is entirely clueless about who this killer is and how he picks his victims, which
leads to the conclusion that they are as far from arresting this killer as they are from arresting Baltimore's most famous serial killer, the Chesapeake Ripper.

It’s not surprising that the FBI is entirely hamstrung since they accused one of their own to be the Chesapeake Ripper only to be faced with the brutal truth that the FBI hadn’t arrested him in the form of Will Graham.

We all remember Mr. Graham from my work in researching the Chesapeake Ripper and the FBI in the past, but since he was released from the BSHCI, Will Graham hasn’t been seen and stays as far away from the FBI as possible the way it seems.

Who knows? Maybe his time under the care of Frederick Chilton has finally dragged to the surface what I always Will Graham to be; a monster without morals and now that he was freed from the accusations of being the Chesapeake Ripper, Graham became what he always tried to hid.

Maybe the Still Life Killer will be found when the FBI will question will Graham or this new killer will simply vanish once the Chesapeake Ripper comes back from his unusual long hiatus.

However, the FBI only shows once more that they are unable to fulfil their duty in protecting Baltimore and its citizens from yet another serial killer without external help.

Now that they lost their bloodhound in the form of Will Graham, the FBI asked no one else but Graham’s former psychiatrist Doctor Hannibal Lecter to consult on the case they can’t solve on their own.

This choice in help makes me question the capability, especially of Jack Crawford, to put together a working team that actually can catch one of the many serial killers and murderers roaming our city.

Is a psychiatrist who missed his own patient’s tendencies for violence and bloodshed a real help in a case that takes another life from the heart of our city every week? And what is this killer doing with the trophies of blood and flesh he takes from his victims every time?

An official request for a statement was left unanswered by the FBI, which is an answer itself.

Many things are still in the shadows regarding this case, the FBI himself casts a big part of this shadow, but Tattlecrime.com will keep up with the investigation and inform you as soon as there is new information to share.

Stay safe Baltimore and hope you don’t meet the Chesapeake Ripper or how new star, the Still Life Killer...and should you end ob your luck’s wrong side and meet Will Graham, you better run ;-) Just to be save.”

Hannibal merely blinked at the display of his tablet while another part of his mind already went through his collection of recipes to decide to do with Freddie Lounce.

The tablet turned dark after several minutes, and this change was enough to get Hannibal up.

It was Friday, and it was still day outside while Hannibal prepared himself for tonight’s work.

He already had Freddie Lounce’s home address in his Rolodex, and as soon as night would lure the city into a false safety of sleep, the Chesapeake Ripper would go hunting again, but this time there
would be no headline on Tattlecrime.com as its most famous face would be the Ripper’s next choice.

This article was an insult to Hannibal himself, the Chesapeake Ripper and Hannibal’s new admirer...and as much as the name fit, Hannibal felt like the name wasn’t giving this man enough credit for his work.

This killer was an artist of a different kind as Hannibal and yet the same.

The only connections between this killer’s victims were their crimes against animals.

Whenever a dead animal was part of the still life, the ensuing investigation would show that the man or woman would show cruelty against animals, and this seemed to be the only flaw in a person this killer was looking for.

The still lives were the victory of the beast of the man, and it made Hannibal think that maybe his killer considered himself more of a beast than a man. It would mean that Hannibal had to reconsider his view regarding the kills and the gifts.

He was being courted, and the other was showing off his skills as a hunter and provider while allowing Hannibal the freedom to accept or decline these gifts.

It only enhanced the curiosity Hannibal felt for this killer, and he would take his time analyzing these new points of view when he was back home; after taking care of Freddie Lounce.

Night fell over the city, and Hannibal vanished in the darkness around his home.

He had another vehicle parked in a secret garage, and that couldn’t lead back to him should it ever be found.

Loading everything into the car’s trunk, Hannibal drove off with his mind entirely focused on his next task.

Freddie lived in a highly-populated area, so Hannibal needed to be quick and silent to avoid drawing attention from the neighbours and to avoid having the police discover the Ripper’s next prominent victim.

He had considered masking this as someone else’s doing, but that would only harden Jack’s point that the Still Life Killer was indeed the Chesapeake Ripper and not someone new.

No, the death of Freddie Lounce had to wear the Ripper’s handwriting, and Hannibal would add her tongue to the dinner he was already planning for his admirer.

Something that used to lie so much could be something beautiful and delicious in death, after all.

Parking in a safe distance to the house, Hannibal made sure to remain in the shadows and to enter the house through the back door.

The second he stepped into the house, he knew that someone else had the same idea for tonight.

The place smelled of blood and fear, and the kitchen was completely trashed. There was another scent among the blood and fear, and it tasted...fruity and warm, amusement.
The killer had hunted Freddie in her own home and played with her.

The living room was dark, just like the kitchen, but even in the darkness, Hannibal could see that the place was trashed. He wondered why nobody came over to check or why the police weren’t already here to kick in the door.

Hannibal reached the stairs leading upstairs, and the scent of blood became stronger. He was warm under the protective plastic suit, but he didn’t care as he was curious about what he was about to find.

When Hannibal reached the end of the stairs, he felt more than heard someone move behind him at the other end of the stairs.

Turning slowly around, Hannibal saw someone standing at the other side of the stairs like the stairs were an invisible border between them.

The darkness of the house concealed the other’s face, but Hannibal saw the light of the streetlamp gleam at the sharp edge of a blade just like he could make out that the man was tilting his head aside as he was watching up at Hannibal.

The gesture reminded Hannibal of a wolf and yet he knew that this man would never hunt with a pack. He was a lone wolf and yet he was courting Hannibal without making him feel less or weak. The wolf wanted Hannibal to see that they were equals.

“I received your gifts. Thank you. I appreciate all of them, and while I prepared a meal for myself with most of them, I made sure to have something for you as well should you decide to join me for dinner.”

The wolf bowed in his head with an elegant move that showed his acknowledged Hannibal’s words and that he was pleased by it.

“I hope you’ll let me know soon when you plan to join me for dinner, my friend.”

The wolf nodded and pointed in the direction where Hannibal considered the bedroom to be.

“Had I known you would be here, I would have left you alone, my friend. I hope I didn’t disturb you while working. I enjoyed your works so far, even when I don’t appreciate you taking things from my home.”

The wolf chuckled, an amused sound, followed by the sound of rustling fabric and the wolf held one of Hannibal’s ties in his hand and into the light of the street lamps.

Sighing, Hannibal shook his head but made sure to keep his body relaxed to show that he wasn’t angry.

“I would like this tie back, please. I don’t want to see the FBI question me about the origin of a silk tie.”

The wolf nodded and stepped back until he was nothing but a shadow among the darkness of the house.
Their chat was over, and Hannibal nodded before he followed the hallway until he reached Freddie’s bedroom, where the scent of blood was the strongest.

The scene presenting itself in front of him made him smile.
The Invitation

Hannibal left Freddie’s house and drove back home. It wasn’t even midnight yet and was only a matter of time until Jack would call him. Until then, Hannibal had enough time to start preparing dinner for tomorrow evening and catch a few hours of sleep as well.

He wasn’t surprised to find another gift at his doorstep, a small cooler with Freddie’s tongue inside of it, but this time Hannibal didn’t find a letter, but that was okay. The final message had been exchanged, and the invitation has been given to the only guest Hannibal would entertain soon.

It was almost two in the morning when Hannibal had prepared everything that needed more time to prepare or marinate.

Sleep didn’t come as quickly to Hannibal as he was used to, but he managed to fall asleep after he pushed all thoughts of the upcoming dinner from his mind.

However, Hannibal’s sleep was interrupted only a few hours later when his phone went off loudly next to his bed.

Reaching for his phone, Hannibal saw Jack’s name flash on the display while his phone kept ringing.

Chuckling, Hannibal hit the answer button and held the phone to his ear while trying to sound as tired as possible.

“Good morning, Jack. What gives me the honour of your call at such an early hour on a Saturday morning?”

“Freddie Lounce is dead and either it was the Ripper or the one she named Still Life Killer with yesterday’s article on Tattlecrime. I need you here as soon as possible, Doctor Lecter.”

Hannibal was already on his feet and pulling a new suit and shirt from his drawer.

“Of course, Jack. Send me the address, and I will be there as soon as possible.”

No need to tell Jack that he already knew where he needed to go and Hannibal was dressed in a few minutes, checked on everything he had prepared hours ago and drove off in the same direction as half a day ago...now with his Bentley and on an official call from the FBI.

Parking his car aside from the fleet of FBI vehicles, Hannibal closed his coat when he left the car and entered the house this time through the front door.

The house still smelled of blood, but now it smelled stale and close to rotten mixed with the scents of the army of agents swarming this place.

No one seemed to notice Hannibal when he used the same stairs as last night and joined Jack in Freddie’s bedroom.

Jack was fuming while staring at the lifeless form of what used to be Freddie Lounce.
The wolf had slit her throat and used the cut to take her tongue as well. A fascinating way to work and the irony of the gift wasn’t lost on Hannibal. The wolf had gifted him the one piece Hannibal had wanted to take from Freddie himself.

After the wolf had killed Freddie, he bound her to one of the high bedposts using one of her scarves. Her long red hair covered Freddie’s face, but otherwise, she was completely naked except for the blood covering her skin down to her belly.

The killer had taken every red piece of clothes from Freddie’s wardrobe and arranged them around her feet.

“One might say it’s a fitting end for Freddie Lounce to end like one of the witches of the Salem Witch trials. How gruesome it may look on the outside, there is a certain beauty in it.”

The glare Jack threw in Hannibal’s direction told him enough that the other man didn’t understand what Hannibal was seeing. Jack merely saw the cruelty of yet another kill and this time; it was obvious who did it. It was written on the wall with Freddie’s blood, after all.

“I’m already used to Freddie Lounce spitting venom at our field of work and our team, especially, but no one deserves to die like this.”

Directing his gaze back onto the body that used to be Freddie Lounce, Hannibal couldn’t stop himself from needling Jack some more.

“True, but Freddie Lounce made a lot of enemies in her field of work and turning her into a painting for the Salem Witch Trials is almost...ironic.”

Jack growled and shook his head.

“If she’s supposed to be a painting of the Witch Trials...what the hell is this?”

Jack bellowed while pointing at the wall and Hannibal didn’t even try to cover that he deplored such a tone of voice.

“Putting the word in context, Jack, this is a dinner invitation even when I can’t say I’m pleased with the used ink.”

His wolf had used Freddie’s blood to write his next letter to Hannibal at the wall, and now it was more than obvious whom this killer was trying to court even to the blind eyes of the FBI.

“Dear Chesapeake Ripper,

dinner at your place tomorrow at 7 PM.

Sincerely,
The Still Life Killer”

“Ink? This psychopath used his victim’s blood to write a message to the Ripper, and he even seems to know who the Ripper while we have no clue who the Still Life Killer and now both of them are planning their dinner over the body of a dead woman! How sick is this?”

Hannibal wouldn’t call it sick more like…poetic.
“I don’t think neither the Ripper nor the Still Life Killer would consider this sick, Jack. Both of them are always two or three steps ahead of you and the FBI. They know how the FBI works and know how to annul you and your team completely.”

Jack growled and stood in the door frame behind Hannibal.

“Now, you sound very much like Will Graham, Doctor Lecter.”

Looking over his shoulder, and it was hard to look away from the beautiful invitation, Hannibal met Jack’s gaze and only looked back at the invitation when Jack turned away and left.

There were many reasons they sounded so much like the other; they had begun to blur even more Will had been arrested and brought to the BSHCI.

However, Hannibal pushed all of this to the back of his mind and left the crime scene. There was nothing for him to do here, and no one stopped him.

Once back at home, Hannibal put his coat away and started to prepare the rest of the dinner he was asked to create.

Lamp loins, small potatoes, perfectly cut steaks, carefully sauntered tongue cut into carpaccio, Mousse au chocolate with a sauce of dark cherries.

Hannibal had no idea what his guest preferred, and so he prepared a bit of everything while he let the wine breathe in the elegant decanter he had bought in France years ago.

Checking the time, Hannibal saw that he spent more time in the kitchen than he planned to and so he hurried a bit to make his kitchen look pristine again before he went upstairs to shower. He didn’t want to make an appearance in the same clothes he wore at a crime scene today.

Freshly showered, Hannibal took his time to pick his suit and dress shirt, slate-coloured suit with a burgundy coloured with a matching tie and waistcoat.

Hannibal just finished putting on his shoes when he heard the doorbell.

Checking his watch, Hannibal smiled when he saw that his guest was right on time.

Walking down the stairs, Hannibal allowed himself a second longer to calm his excitement… before he opened the door and stared into almost feral blue eyes.

“Good evening, Doctor Lecter. I hope I’m not too late for our dinner.”
Hannibal needed the length of a heartbeat to step back into the role of the host, and he hoped his surprise of seeing Will at his threshold didn’t show on his face.

Will’s lips twitched a bit into a small smile that showed the edge of his teeth; his wolf was taunting him because Will had seen Hannibal’s irritation.

“Will, of course not. You are right on time. Please, come in.”

Stepping aside, Hannibal made room for Will come in, and Hannibal saw the wolf Will Graham had become in each of his steps until Hannibal could close the door.

Hannibal wanted to take Will’s coat, completely back in his role as the good host, but Will offered him a grey box with the silvery head of a stag at the front.

“A gift. Since you are providing the dinner, I thought it would only be amiable to take care of the drinks for after dinner.”

Accepting the box, Hannibal checked the label and was surprised by Will’s exquisite choice.

“A 25 years old Dalmore whiskey. I knew you always favoured Single Malt to Scotch, but this is more than just a quick drink. However, it will taste perfectly after dessert, which happens to be my homemade Mousse au Chocolat.”

Will meanwhile had hung up his coat, and when Hannibal looked up, his gaze fell on Will’s back a second before he turned back around.

Straight and strong back, shoulders pulled back, and the fine material of his dark blue shirt looked smooth and soft. Not Will’s usual choice of clothes, but it seemed that a lot of Will had changed over the last months.

“Then, I made the right choice with my gift as a second dessert.”

Meeting Will’s eyes, Hannibal noticed that the wolf behind Will’s eyes was watching him, and yet it felt like Hannibal was watching into a mirror as well.

“Indeed, Will. How about we continue our conversation in the kitchen? The dinner table is already set if you prefer to wait there.”

Will shook his head and adjusted the cuff of his shirt around his watch.

“Lead the way into your domain, Doctor.”

Having Will at his back, even for a short time it took to reach the kitchen, felt like having his shadow following him from a sunny place inside and yet there was no feeling of threat from his wolf.

“I must say, Will, I was surprised at the...directness of your invitation, even when you invited yourself for dinner at my table.”
Hannibal was already preparing their plates for the carree as the first dish but looked up when he noticed Will stepping closer to the kitchen isle.

“Was my invitation to your liking, Doctor? You had no idea who was inviting themselves into your home after all. I’m sure you took precautionary measures before your guest arrived.”

Taking the carree out of the oven after he had rolled up the sleeves of his shirt, Hannibal shook his head while putting the pan down.

“The invitation was wonderful will, and the orchestration of the Salem Witch Trials had something tragic and yet fitting. Also, no. I saw no reasons for precautionary measures as I considered this a dinner between two individuals with common interests. Had I know that this would be a dinner between friends, I would have taken more time to prepare this feast.”

Will growled, an actual and feral sound while prowling back and forth along the kitchen isle.

“I thought it was fitting, and the idea came to me after I caught the frightened rabbit. It seemed...fitting after everything that happened in the past. Jack didn’t saw the beauty in it, didn’t he?”

Shaking his head, Hannibal cut the carree apart between the bones and placed the meat on the plates.

“No, he never saw the beauty in the still lives you’ve created and your work was magnificent as it was temporary. Jack was convinced that the Chesapeake Ripper was the one behind these new killings despite my insistence that it was someone else, someone new. However, seeing you at my door this evening was a surprise, even to me, Will.”

The heavy sigh Hannibal heard from Will wasn’t the reaction he had been hoping for, and when he looked up from the creation on the first plate, Will was shaking his head.

“Jack is too angry to see, and his blindness will never allow him to catch the big sharks in the ocean of serial killers and murderers. Even after I was declared free and was released from the BSHCI and Frederick’s...care, he still believed to have finally found his nemesis in the form of the Chesapeake Ripper in me. He set two agents on me right after I was allowed to go. I noticed them right away and something in me...I wanted to take the first heavy object, smash the window of their car and kill them with my bare hands just because I wanted to be left alone for the first time in weeks with no one looking over my shoulder while I nothing but exist. What does this tell you about me, Doctor?”

Two plates in his hand, Hannibal waited for Will to step away from the kitchen isle and follow him to the already prepared dinner table next door.

Putting the plates down, Hannibal pulled the chair opposite from Hannibal’s away from the table and waited for the wolf to take his seat.

Will blinked, and for a second, Hannibal saw nothing but Will, confused by such a small gesture of courtesy before shards of the mirror were back in place, but now Hannibal saw himself and Will in these lapis blue eyes. Interesting.

“You were held in a cage like an animal while your jailer tried to break your mind apart and your
visitors either tried to see what you are or are not and with all the curtains pulled back and the stage flooded with the true colours of everyone coming to see you, you finally saw their true colours while you could walk the shadows behind the stage. They became the sheep on the grazing land while you became the wolf the sheep feared simply based on their instincts. They hoped the bars of your cage would hold you in while they could relent in their macabre fear to watch the caged wolf while standing on a safe distance without knowing that one day the wolf would break free.”

Hannibal had taken his own seat while speaking, and Will seemed to consider his words as he had taken his cutlery off the table but made no move to start eating.

“You came to visit me as well, Doctor Lecter. What did you see behind the bars of the cage you created for me?”

Hannibal saw the bait and decided to take it.

“You came too close to the truth, and while it always has been fairly easy to lead others in the wrong direction, you wouldn’t falter. I had to act to protect myself, and your condition caused by encephalitis helped me. However, seeing you at this place, and under the care of Frederick Chilton of all people, was never something I desire. More so, I despised seeing you there, but when I saw the darkness you always held on a tight leash start to grow, I was sure you wouldn’t care anymore what others saw in you in me. At some point, I was sure you would come for me to kill me, solve the problem of the Chesapeake Ripper one and for all.”

No expression on Will’s face gave away what he thought as he held Hannibal’s gaze and consumed his first bite of meat, the meat Will himself had provided for this dinner.

It was mesmerizing to watch Will consume his first bite, knowingly what it was what he was eating and that Will himself was responsible for its place on his plate.

When Will swallowed the bite, Hannibal felt his fingers itch with the urge to wrap them around Will’s throat to feel the muscles move when he consumed his next bite, his next piece of meat.

“I considered it, Doctor, but first, I had to take care of the agents following me everywhere. They even tried to follow me back home, and that’s when I decided to call Jack while I approached them sitting in their oh so inconspicuous car.”

Will smiled at the memory, and it was the smile of a delighted cat who finally caught the mouse.

“Jack wasn’t pleased that I know about the agents from the second on I was released from my cage, and the agents turned white as a sheet. However, I knew that Jack wouldn’t give up easily, and so I waited for the next agents to show up. It took me a while to figure them out, but when you run into the same people at five different stores on the same day…”

Allowing himself a small laughter, Hannibal shook his head and took a sip from the wine Will had poured into their glasses while Hannibal spoke earlier.

“A rookie mistake, but I take it; you didn’t kill them.”

Will huffed and glared at Hannibal, another bait, but this time from Hannibal at Will, and finally Hannibal saw the mirror break apart, and the darkness that was pure and unique Will Graham came to the surface.
“No, that would be a rookie mistake, Doctor. I approached them while I was shopping for fishing gear and told them to give Jack Crawford my greetings and should I find more agents following me around, I would lodge a complaint with the FBI that he was using federal agents to surveil other FBI employees.”

They both finished their plate and together they moved back to the kitchen. Will leaned against the wall to observe Hannibal’s work while Hannibal started to prepare the steaks together with the small rosemary potatoes and a green salad.

“Jack got your message, I presume?”

Will nodded but he moved closer to Hannibal and took glass from the cabinet before he filled it with water from the tab.

“I haven’t seen any agents around me in months and so I think he got the message. I haven’t been at the academy since I was released from the BSHCI. The lady at the HR office was all too happy to accept my request to take all my vacation and sick days from the last couple of years. I’m still considering what to do now but there is still time for that.”

Will refilled his glass at the tab while Hannibal added rosemary and garlic to the steaks roasting in the pan.

“When Jack called me to the first crime scene of the Still Life Killer, I asked him while I got the call instead of you. He was rather upset are you lack of presence and given you busted his agents following you around in no time, I think everyone would be upset about this. However, what changed your decision to pay me a visit, Will.”

Will huffed again but Hannibal heard the amusement behind the sound and when he looked up, he saw a smile full of teeth on Will’s face.

“The first one I killed...I saw how he was hitting his dog with his belt. The animal was terrified and not aggressive even when his owner wouldn’t stop. I stopped what I was doing and...watched. It felt like a...curtain, was the word you used earlier, had been pulled away from my eyes and I could see what I wanted to do to his man who would beat a dog until he was laying in a puddle of his own blood. I felt with a clear certainty of what I needed to do and what I had to do. I waited for the man to leave the whimpering dog bleeding in his front yard and snatched the dog while nobody was watching. I waited for the night and that’s when I knew which killer was currently looking through my eyes at this man. I had become the Chesapeake Ripper, I had become you, Doctor Lecter, and for the first time, I finally understood why you were doing what you are doing.”

Will took another sip from his glass and licked a droplet of what from his lips and this gesture almost made Hannibal forget that he had to keep an eye on the steaks before they would go to waste in the pan.

“Sheep need a shepherd to take care of them or the wolf comes and drags them into the night...why should the wolves fight each other when there are enough sheep for them to share?”
Well, here we are, in the end.

Thank you for staying with me for this story and leaving me so much wonderful feedback. Alessa13 asked for my permission to translate my story into Spanish for a friend and of course I gave my permission :)

I hope my writer's brain will allow me to go back to another story I started writing months ago because it's already at 11/15 chapters, 30k words, and it hast werewolves, vampires and of course....murder...husbands :D

Enjoy the last chapter and stay tuned for more!

Silva

Hannibal heard Will’s words and everything in his mind came to a sudden stop while he tried to proceed with what he had heard.

Was Will implying that…?

“Yes, Hannibal, that's exactly what I am implying.”

It was the first time Will referred to Hannibal by his name and not his professional title, and it felt more intimate than it had any right to be.

“Why the sudden change of a heart, Will?”

The steaks were finished and so Hannibal put them on new plates with the side dishes he had prepared but he knew that he was just doing these tasks to avoid looking at Will.

What would he see now that Will was about to give Hannibal what he desires for so long? Would he look into the same mirror as earlier and only see his mind reflecting on those blue eyes, or would it be the wolf Will had released from its leash when he was forced into a cage built by Hannibal himself.

“Sometimes it needs to force to make one see but when you see too much one might need a paddle to navigate through the waters but when even this is taken away from you you either learn to swim or you drown. I’ve decided that that drowning isn’t an option and that being who I’ve always meant to be takes much less effort than meeting other’s standards.”

Hannibal was about to take their plates but Will beat him to it with a sly smirk on his face before he left the kitchen and left Hannibal no other choice but to follow.

Will put their plates down on the table only to pull Hannibal’s chair back much as Hannibal had down it earlier for Will.
“Are you walking right now through my mind, Will?”

Will shrugged, a graceful movement, while he waited for Hannibal to take his plate.

“I could but I have no reason to do so. We’ve begun to blur a long time ago, you and I. Walking in your mind come as easily to me as preparing such a fine dinner for you. We are conjoined on a level no one but we can understand because we’ve chosen to stop being sheep and become the wolf at some point. The Chesapeake Ripper became a fixed point in my mind because he was so much alike the darkness within me. A darkness everyone seemed to fear but not you, you always wanted me to embrace it because you were curious about what would happen. Is the outcome to your liking, Hannibal?”

Accepting his seat, Hannibal was almost painfully aware of Will at his back but it was like the feeling when you know that a cat was prowling around you in the darkness of your bedroom and ready to settle.

“That remains to be seen, Will. You had time to consider every possibility while I was left in the dark to wonder who the wolf could possibly be who offers me his prey.”

Suddenly Will was more than close, leaning in until Hannibal could feel Will’s warm breath at his throat.

“And you liked the prey I offered you from the beginning, didn’t you?”

Whispered words but they sent sharp shivers down Hannibal’s back.

“Of course or otherwise, you would have stopped bringing them to me. Letting such wonderful gifts as yours go to waste would be unspeakably rude.”

Will chuckled before he leaned even closer and pressed his nose against Hannibal’s throat.

It was hard not to tense because only prey would go tense with the wolf’s teeth at his throat and while Hannibal was a wolf like Will, instincts were sometimes hard to fight.

“True and who knows what I could have done when you declined my gifts?”

Without warning, Will pulled back and Hannibal felt dizzy at the loss of Will’s heat against his skin. He wanted to hold the other man close and return the gesture of teeth too close to Will’s throat but Hannibal allowed Will to walk around the table and take his seat.

The expression on Will’s face told Hannibal that the feeling was mutual and there would be time for this...later.

They ate in complete silence but the room was filled with anticipation and energy which felt wild and sexual at once.

Hannibal had always been aware that he felt drawn to Will Graham since the moment they met for the first time in Jack’s office but he couldn’t decide if it was purely because of Will’s otherness and unique mind or if there was a physical aspect as well.
However, the way Will seemed to stare right through him and how often he used every opportunity to close the distance between them, Hannibal was sure that there was no lack of physical aspect of this courtship.

In this, Hannibal was more than sure, it still was a courtship, and until now, Hannibal been rather passive...and he still had a question to answer.

“If I had declined your gifts, you would have shown yourself much earlier than you chose to, Will, and if I had any suspicion that it would be you, I would have declined them right away to force your hand to come to me.”

Will slowly chewed his bite of steak and licked his lips to gather the last taste from his lips before he answered.

“You mean you wanted me to come to you when I was less prepared for your table?”

Smiling, Hannibal leaned back in his chair as he had finished his dinner while Will finished his.

“Maybe that or I would have been prepared this dinner entirely different.”

Will’s expression changed and was now more open than through the whole evening.

“More formal with things I can barely pronounce or less formal and more...sharp?”

“I could teach all the fine things life has to offer those who know to reach for them, to enjoy them, Will. The sheep will part and scatter to make room for you while trying to bath in the presence of the wolf who is hiding in brought light and right in their midst.”

Watching Will lean back in his chair reminded Hannibal more of a sated cat than a wolf but maybe Hannibal had been wrong from the beginning. Will with his mind capable of experiencing pure empathy...maybe Will was indeed the monster hiding under the bed everyone learned to fear from a young age on.

It was a good thing that Hannibal learned his lesson about monsters as a young boy and chose to become the darkness; even the monster learned to fear. Now, with Will, he had found not only his equal but a different part of himself as well. A less sophisticated and more feral part where he could offer Will whatever he wanted.

“I think it’s time for the dessert now.”

Blinking, Hannibal found himself already at the threshold of his mind palace when Will’s voice brought him back into the present.

“You are right, Will. May apologize to let wait.”

Together they walked back into the kitchen and the atmosphere around them had changed and had become heavy like the universe was waiting for the last penny to drop.

Turning to the refrigerator to get the Mousse au Chocolat, Hannibal heard the all too known sound of metal scratching over metal.

“What if I want a...different kind of dessert, Hannibal?”
Looking over his shoulder, Hannibal watched Will drag the edge of a blade that didn’t belong to Hannibal over the work surface while his gaze was fixated on Hannibal.

“Depends on your preference of dessert, Will.”

The next sound Hannibal heard from Will was something behind an amused huff and a growl and Hannibal could feel the blade of the knife at the nap of his neck and the metal was strangely warm. Will had to have it close to his body to be so warm and that he came prepared for the worst only highlighted the excitement Hannibal felt.

“I have a lot of preferences but I know what I want right at this moment.”

Hannibal had always known that Will was strong and paired with his training as a cop he could take down a much stronger man, but Hannibal found himself presses against his refrigerator and with a sharp blade pressed against his throat.

He felt the blade cut into his skin with barely any pressure and he saw a wild hunger reflect in Will’s eyes before he surged forward and closed his lips around the shallow cut he made with his blade.

Hannibal’s instincts screamed at him to push the wolf at this throat away but there was no sense of danger and Will’s mouth was warm and alluring against Hannibal’s skin.

Sharp teeth nipped at sensitive skin while a warm tongue gathered every droplet of blood from the shallow cut and rarely had something felt so natural than having Will so close and while he was his first taste of Hannibal’s flesh.

Will’s dark curls were soft between Hannibal’s fingers but he immediately tightened his grip and pulled Will back from his throat. The wolf growled low and warningly and Will’s lips were darker than usual because the blood smeared all over them and yet Hannibal felt no blood dripping down his skin.

Holding the wolf in place, Hannibal felt the sharp kiss of the blade against his wrist, a warning, but he only smiled before he pressed his lips against Will’s blood-covered ones.

Their first kiss started slow and just with their lips pressed against each other before Hannibal decided that he needed to what his blood would taste like when it came right from Will Graham’s lips.

The first taste was like fine wine and dark chocolate, the second taste was full of heat and desire and the third taste sets things into motion.

Hannibal wasn’t sure who of them snarled but the sound was feral and Will snapped with his teeth at Hannibal’s throat when he used his strength to push Will back against the kitchen isle.

Things clattered loudly when they hit the ground but for once, Hannibal didn’t care for the pristine optic of his kitchen when he finally had what he desired for so long.

One hand still buried in Will’s untamed curls, Hannibal finally followed his earlier urge and closed his fingers around Will’s throat when he pulled back to look down at this wolf.
Will licked his lips, his eyes burning with a fire Hannibal wanted to see every day in the future and when he tightened his grip, he could feel Will’s pulls hammer under his fingers and the strong muscles shifted when Will moved without breaking Hannibal’s hold on.

There was no need to press down harder as the feeling of Will’s beating heart was enough to push Hannibal’s darkness back and when Hannibal looked into the blue eyes of his wolf, he saw the same happening to Will.

The next kiss that followed was rough and bruising, more teeth than finesse while they made their way upstairs.

They stopped several times, even on the stairs to kiss and feel each other even when it had to look like they tried to devour each other.

Once they reached Hannibal’s bedroom and never had Hannibal been so grateful for a breach of his privacy in the past, they broke apart to stare at each other.

There was a moment of silence between them while they just looked at each other as the seconds passed by like sand in an hourglass.

When Will finally started to open the buttons of his shirt, Hannibal felt his hands move on their account when he opened the buttons of his waistcoat and pulled his tie loose.

They never took their eyes off each other while they undressed in front of the other and yet they never stopped staring at each other as well.

Only when they had to untie their shoes did they break their staring contest, but once they were utterly naked, they allowed the other to just...look.

Hannibal saw all the scars on Will’s skin, the scar on his shoulder from where he was shot as a cop the most prominent one but there were other scars well and even Hannibal wasn’t without his flaws.

When their skin touched for the first time, Hannibal was at a loss of words how he should describe the feeling of Will’s skin against his own. He could feel and see Will’s strength while the wolf looked back at him from blue eyes and the hunger Hannibal saw there mirrored his own.

Hannibal didn’t offer a fight when Will pushed him back onto his bed only to straddle Hannibal’s lap like it was the only place in the world where Will wanted to be.

Lifting his hands, Hannibal placed them on Will’s tights and felt the strong muscles tense as Will kept himself upright as he lifted one of Hannibal’s hands from his skin only to place a kiss on the inside of Hannibal’s wrist where he had put his blade earlier.

Will licked the skin there and when Will started to bite the soft and sensitive skin there, Hannibal had to close his eyes at the sensations. It was sharp and arousing feeling to have his wolf’s teeth at his wrist where he could so so much damage and yet Hannibal would allow Will to do anything he wanted.

The wolf growled and only when Will started to rub his erection against Hannibal’s became he aware how painfully aroused he was and that he didn’t care what came next. Desire and lust demanded more but when Hannibal tried to push himself up to reach for the lube in the nightstand,
his wolf growled and held Hannibal down with a firm hand right over his heart.

Will snapped his teeth at Hannibal because he dared to move and Hannibal couldn’t keep himself from giving his wolf a challenging smirk only to have Will huff at him with laughter.

When Will reached for the top drawer of the nightstand to get the lube out, Hannibal looked at Will with one eyebrow pulled up.

Just how much had Will been snooping around while Hannibal hadn’t even been aware of the wolf walking into another wolf’s den?

Now it was Will’s turn to smirk but he let go of Hannibal only to push himself up until he was kneeling right over Hannibal and it felt like he was looking up at Michelangelo’s David for the first time - nothing but perfection and the sound Will made when he reached behind himself with lube-wet fingers only enhanced the other’s beauty.

The small sounds coming past Will’s lips could either be pain or pleasure, Hannibal didn’t know yet, but Will didn’t stop and the rest blush marking his skin more and more only made him look more beautiful in Hannibal’s eyes.

When Hannibal tried to reach out for Will, offer him a different kind of diversion, that wolf pushed Hannibal back into the soft and yet cool covers of the bed while Will was already panting when he finally reached for Hannibal’s cock.

Hissing at the feeling of cold lube and warm fingers on his even hotter skin, Hannibal had to fight himself to keep his hands to himself as his wolf clearly didn’t want him to interfere and he growled loudly when Hannibal placed his hands once more on Will’s tights.

The touch was accepted when Hannibal made no move to control Will and just kept touching him.

However, when Will finally lowered himself onto Hannibal’s cock, it became hard to stay passive and allow his wolf to take what he desired.

Clearly, Will hadn’t taken enough time to prepare himself and the tight heat around Hannibal’s cock was prove enough and yet Will didn’t stop.

He slowly worked his way down until he had taken all Hannibal had to give only to start to move his hips in slow circles until his breath was nothing but as broken gasp.

Hannibal found himself once more pinned to the bed while Will only seemed to care about his pleasure and yet it only strengthened Hannibal’s own.

The selfishness in this act, the way Will was seeking nothing but his sharp pleasure with every slow circle showed Hannibal so much about Will and the way he wanted his pleasure.

The circles became faster and sharper and Will grunted while Hannibal dug his fingers into the hard muscles of Will’s hip to feel the strength of the other’s movement even more.

It was beautiful to watch the way Will consumed his pleasure without offering Hannibal anything in return except for the pleasure to watch Will chasing his orgasm.

The hand on Hannibal’s chest pinning him down became claws and Hannibal was almost at the
point to finish this came and take Will’s jerking cock in his hand to allow him to finish…but Will beat him to it.

The sound of Will’s moan was a perfect sound Hannibal had ever heard and when he felt the hot splatters of Will’s release hit his skin, Hannibal knew that he would never be able to let Will go again.

When Will let go of himself and leaned heavily on Hannibal, Hannibal couldn’t resist and pushed the few unruly curls that had fallen into Will’s face out of his warm and sweaty face.

There were no words left in Hannibal to describe this moment but he knew that should their lives end tomorrow or in a hundred years, he would always remember this moment in perfect clarity.

Will seemed to expect Hannibal’s next move when he found himself turned around and on his back and Hannibal nipped at Will’s lips when strong legs were wrapped tightly around Hannibal’s hips.

Each sharp thrust of Hannibal made Will mewl and he reached out for Hannibal only to hold onto the longer strands of hair at Hannibal’s nap.

Hannibal had wanted to act as selfish as Will had, as Hannibal had allowed it, but when he found himself pulled down by Will into a kiss, Hannibal allowed Will once more to take what he desired.

Deep down, both of them knew that Hannibal would always give in and would allow Will to take what he desired…

The next morning…

Jack started to hate the cold and he hated this new killer even more. The FBI had been informed by the police of a new crime scene of the Still Life Killer early in the morning and when Doctor Lecter didn’t answer his phone, Jack had fear for the worst considering the doctor’s involvement in the case and that he was part of the last article Freddie Lounce published.

What Jack wasn’t expecting when he rang the bell for the third time, was to see Will Graham open the door.

Irritated, Jack took Will’s appearance in; barefoot but in dress pants with an unbutton dark blue shirt, tousled hair and...it was only his training and his experience that allowed Jack not to step back at what he saw in Will Graham’s eyes.

Typically, he would describe it as rage what he saw in Will’s eyes but Doctor Lecter’s words from the time when Will had been at the BSHCI came back to him; darkness. There was a barely contained darkness in Will’s eyes and Jack wasn’t sure what the man who had walked in the skin of many serial killers of the worst kind was now capable of.

The smirk which appeared on Will’s face was taunting as if he was aware of what Jack was thinking.

“Good morning, Jack. What brings you here at such an early time?”

Clearing his throat, Jack managed to stand his ground, barely.

“Good morning, Will. I need to speak to Doctor Lecter about a case he has been consulting on for
the FBI.”

Will shrugged and looked over his shoulder at the stairs leading to the second level of the house.

“I think he’s still asleep but you can come in and wait inside.”

Nodding, Jack stepped in with Will holding the door open for him but...when the door fell shut at his back, Jack couldn’t shake off the feeling that he just walked into a beast’s den.

End Notes

For more of my insanity, find me on tumblr: Silvaxus You want on my taglist on tumblr? No Problem! Write me a message either here on Ao3 with your tumblr tag or write me on tumblr.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!