Hannibal the Handyman

by Jenetica

Summary

Perhaps better entitled "What the Hell is Hannibal Lecter Doing Mowing My Lawn, a Tale by Will Graham."
"Have you thought that perhaps reorganizing your physical world might help you to calm your mental one?" Hannibal Lecter asked Will.

Will considered the question. "Short answer? No."

Hannibal sighed. "I cannot help someone who is unwilling to help himself, Will. If you live your life giving half-answers and off-handed comments, you will never receive more than half-truths in return."

Will rolled his eyes. "Alright, alright. So, like what? I'm not a messy person."

"You live with multiple stray dogs and you cut your feet sleepwalking around your property," Hannibal retorted. "Try again."

"My dogs are clean animals! And I cut my feet on the grass. you try again."

Hannibal leaned forward, eyes stormy. "You will make no progress if you continue to fight the people who are trying to help you."

"Okay! So what, do you want me to fucking feng shui my house or something?" Will snapped. Hannibal had no right to come into his life and tell him how he should be living.

Well, the reasonable part of his consciousness said, actually, as your therapist, he has every right to tell you how to live your life.


"I was not suggesting the art of feng shui," Hannibal responded, as if he didn't know what Will had been thinking. Yeah, right. The fucking twinkle in his eye said it all. "I doubt arranging your possessions into corners of hope and love are going to solve your particular mental difficulties."

Will laughed aloud, and he saw Hannibal smile slightly. "I think I'd have to agree with you," Will said dryly. "Okay, you got me. What were you thinking?"

Hannibal hummed in thought. "I think you need to spend time at home. Take a vacation from work and remove yourself from the complications your profession presents you. Refocus your energies on building a house that you find soothing, one that can unburden your shoulders when you walk in the door."

"You want me to rebuild my house?" Will exclaimed.

"I want you to do anything you need to do in order for you to feel comfortable releasing your tension there," Hannibal corrected. "I would be more than happy to help you, if you so wish."

Will analyzed his psychiatrist for a moment. "You would be willing to help me?"

"Only if you feel my presence would be welcome," Hannibal responded.
"Yeah," said Will blankly. "Yeah, okay. Sure."

"Very well," Hannibal said, ushering Will to the door. "I'll see you tomorrow." He clicked the door shut in Will's face.

"... Tomorrow?"

The next morning dawned bright and early, but the light wasn't what woke Will. He wasn't sure why he'd woken, actually—it was getting harder and harder to understand the why of anything anymore—but it didn't matter. He had “cleaning” to do this morning.

He'd called Jack last night, and the man had been happy to give him some time off. "Get yourself back on your feet," he'd said, with a sort of subtle pity that he usually reserved for the family members of the victims he analyzed. Will wondered if there were bets in the unit to see how long his fragile grip on sanity would last. Honestly, if he were someone outside of himself, he would probably have bet that he was already insane, and just a good faker.

It's what he felt like, anyway.

He dragged himself downstairs to make coffee. One teaspoon of instant java to a cup of boiling hot water, otherwise known as Will’s salvation. He blew across the surface of the liquid, watching the white drift of steam defy gravity. The world was magnificent, if one paid any attention. Will hoped that he might get some time to do just that, now that he didn’t need to confront the brutal shortcomings of humanity on a day-to-day basis.

He moved into his living room and went to let his dogs out. When he opened the door, the soft drone he hadn’t realized he’d been hearing suddenly became a roar of mechanical noise, and Will realized that this was what had woken him.

He squinted into the sunlight and nearly dropped his mug. Someone was mowing his lawn. Not just anyone, Will realized. Hannibal Lecter was mowing his lawn. He closed his eyes. “It is eight forty-seven a.m. I am in Wolf Trap, Virginia. My name is Will Graham.” He opened his eyes. Not a hallucination, then.

Hannibal Lecter was mowing his lawn. With a push mower. What was Will’s psychiatrist doing mowing his lawn with a push mower? Will closed his door and sat on the sofa, flabbergasted. “I’ll see you tomorrow,” Hannibal had said. But… really?

Will’s front door opened, and Hannibal strode in. He walked straight into the kitchen, removing his leather gloves with swift tugs, and poured himself a glass of water, drinking the entire thing in one long swallow. Will watched his throat work, sweaty and tan, and suddenly his mouth felt dry.

“Ah, Will,” greeted Hannibal, noticing the younger man on the sofa. “Good morning! I hope you don’t mind, but it has begun to get hot and I don’t want to become dehydrated. I mean no imposition.”

“Imposition?” Will repeated, stunned into amusement. “Hannibal. You’re mowing my grass. Why are you mowing my grass?”

“I enjoy it. I find that trimming one’s lawn is a clean sort of exercise. It fills one with the sensation of grooming Mother Nature, don’t you think?” Hannibal replied evenly.
“You are mowing my grass because you—” Will’s lips twisted into a mocking smile, “—you enjoy shaving Mother Nature’s legs?”

Hannibal frowned. “I suppose if you want to oversimplify my enjoyment for your own amusement, you are within your rights, but no, I am not ‘shaving Mother Nature’s legs,’ as you so crudely put it. I am giving your lawn the first modicum of attention it has received in the past two weeks.”

Will had the decency to look ashamed. “It’s been rough, lately,” he confessed. “Even doing simple things, it’s—it’s awful.”

Hannibal’s eyes scanned over his face, calculating. “Why do you think I suggested this vacation? You must embrace the reality of these ‘simple things,’ Will. One cannot run without first discovering one has feet.”

“But you’re cutting the grass for me,” Will argued. “How is that helping me ‘find my feet’?”

“I must confess, this is a moment of weakness on my part,” Hannibal said with a small grin. It suited him, Will thought. “I have not gotten to trim grass since I moved to Baltimore. I missed it.”

“You missed cutting grass? Why are they paying you to be my therapist? You can just mow my lawn for pay if you need the money.”

Hannibal laughed, a rich sound that Will had never heard before. “Perhaps, once my mind has dwindled past the point of helpfulness, I will consider your offer. For now, I would like to finish the front lawn before it gets too much hotter. The sun can be quite unforgiving.”

With that, he placed his empty glass in Will’s sink and walked back out to the mower. He gripped the handles together and tugged sharply on the pull cord. Will watched the muscles in his arms flex as the mower started, and Hannibal began to push his way—in long, straight lines—across Will’s front yard.

Stuck with nothing else to do, and too enraptured to turn away, Will sat on his sofa and watched Hannibal work. He was dressed far more casually than usual. Hannibal wore a white wife-beater (though it was beginning to tinge green from the grass clippings), faded, worn jeans, and sneakers, which were clothes that Will had never even imagined Hannibal owning, much less wearing.

Nevertheless, he wasn’t complaining. Hannibal paused for a second, taking off his shirt to mop the sweat off his face, then put it back on. Will swallowed compulsively. Hannibal’s torso was embarrassingly nice. Will had always considered himself to be a good-looking sort of guy—blessed in the physical where he was cursed psychologically—but he felt plain compared to Hannibal. The man was easily ten years his senior, but he looked like a twenty-year-old when his shirt was off. His body was lean and tan (how could he be tan when he wore a suit all the time?), but just muscled enough to imply that he was not one to be messed with.

Will had always assumed that Hannibal took care of himself. His gourmet nightly meals and impeccable everything suggested that Hannibal possessed complete control over his life, especially in his fitness. Will tried not to let his mind linger on Hannibal’s fitness, though. If the man was going to be spending his days at Will’s taking off his clothes and doing manual labor, Will would have to keep his eyes and mind to himself. It was unhealthy to admire one’s psychiatrist; it indicated a desire for normalcy that manifested itself sexually, which was all sorts of wrong. Will didn’t need more wrong in his life.

So, no matter how edible (Chesapeake Ripper cannibalism flesh rip) his psychiatrist looked, Will would not notice. Not at all.
Was that how Hannibal had always looked from the back? Oh.

Will wrestled himself out of his reverie and found a job to do far away from windows overlooking his front lawn. Plenty to do in this house. Will found himself reorganizing his closet, hiding away in the comfort of the small, dark space. He found ways to toil away hours in his bedroom, organizing his clothes just to decide that the arrangement didn’t feel quite parsimonious enough. So he’d do it again.

He almost didn’t hear Hannibal call to him, so involved was he with forcing himself to not think about his psychiatrist and how good his ass looked in jeans.

“Will?” Hannibal called again, this time sounding more concerned.

“Up here!” Will shouted back, torn from his forbidden thoughts about the line of Hannibal’s hips. “My bedroom. Just finishing up my closets.” He hurried to put clothes away, to look like he’d actually done something with his time.

He heard Hannibal climb the stairs, and a moment later the man walked into the room. One glance around, and Will realized that he hadn’t convinced Hannibal of anything.

“I just finished the front,” Hannibal stated, turning his eyes to Will, “and I was about to make lunch. I brought some provisions, as I wasn’t sure how well-stocked you kept your kitchen.”

“Not very,” Will spoke honestly. “I keep basics here for when I do cook, but most of my meals are either with you or take-out.”

Hannibal looked simultaneously pleased and disgruntled, which was a peculiar mixture of expressions, in Will’s opinion. “I see,” Hannibal said. “Well, perhaps after we finish working on your house, we can work on your cooking skills, hmm?”

Will nodded immediately. If there was one magical bit of Hannibal (and there were several; Will had seen them that morning), it was his finesse in the kitchen. If Will could learn anything from Hannibal, he would.

And he did mean anything. No. No, he didn’t. But yes, I do. Will thought before he could stop himself. Oh well. As long as he kept his thoughts to his mindscape, it didn’t really matter.

But the bridge between mindscape and reality was a problem for Will, he reminded himself, so it did matter.

“Will?” Hannibal said curiously. Will forced himself to look at Hannibal’s face, which was shiny and smudged with dirt. It was hard for Will to combine the thoughts of careful, cutting Dr. Lecter and this sweaty, muscular, bronzed man before him.

Hannibal was currently using a dish towel to mop sweat off the back of his neck, which bunched up the muscles in his arms while stretching the ones along his torso.

“Yes, Hannibal?” Will croaked, hoping his blatant ogling wasn’t too, well, blatant.

“Lunch?” Hannibal questioned. Damn him if that wasn’t a knowing twinkle in his eye. Damn him to Hell.

“Sounds great,” Will replied, thankful when his voice came out even. This was going to be a long, long two weeks.
Hannibal walked back down the stairs to the kitchen, avoiding the curious, poking noses of Will’s dogs.

“What’s the matter?” Will teased, proud to finally have control of his mouth’s utterances. “Do you dislike dogs?”

“Animals and I have had an… interesting relationship.” Hannibal responded vaguely. “But, for our purposes it is best to just say ‘Yes, I do.’ Dogs have an eager desire to be loved that I find rather uncouth.”

“Oh,” Will said, at a loss for words. How could anyone hate dogs for their desire to be loved? All they wanted was someone to reach out, to give them a timeframe to cling to because their minds were incapable of keeping track. All they needed was the affection of people that affirmed their existence, their worth, their ability to be loved.

All at once, this wasn’t about dogs at all.

Will followed Hannibal into the kitchen and watched him unpack a large cooler of supplies. Sliced meats, cheeses, vegetables, and rough loaves of bread were laid out before Will realized what Hannibal was planning.

“I didn’t think you even knew what sandwiches were,” Will said, pleasantly surprised.

Hannibal glanced up from where he was placing the food in an organized line. “I am very aware of the existence of sandwiches, Will,” Hannibal said in a tone that indicated how foolish Will’s joke had been. Will pinked a little. “They are the perfect meal when one is doing work outside, as they are easy to make and satisfactory no matter how much food one craves. Also, I did not know what to expect of your kitchen. Next time, I will bring a more substantial meal.”

All Will heard was ‘next time.’ Hannibal was going to be in his house again, cooking and helping to sort out Will’s world. Hannibal was going to be sweaty and gorgeous and still as astute as ever. Will was never going to survive.

The men constructed their sandwiches, Will trying to select meats and cheeses that looked remotely familiar to him, while Hannibal piled a little bit of everything on his sandwich. He even folded the meat into perfect little semi-circles.

They ate in relative silence. Will’s dogs didn’t beg at their feet, for which he was grateful. They were trained not to, of course, but Will wasn’t sure how having company would affect their training. He hadn’t had enough guests over to find out. Luckily, they seemed to take Hannibal very seriously and stayed on their beds in the living room.

Hannibal took notice, too. “Your dogs are very well-trained,” he commended after finishing his sandwich.

“Thanks,” Will brushed the crumbs from his fingertips. “It’s not that hard to train them, after the first couple of dogs. Strays are typically so happy to have a home that they’ll do anything to stay in it.”

“That must be very gratifying,” Hannibal commented. He began packing the leftover food back into his cooler. “I would imagine that surrounding yourself with the undiscerning love of the needy gives your mind a much needed balm from the torment of the outside world.”

Will colored. When Hannibal put it that way, it sounded like he was taking advantage of his dogs
instead of taking in lives that had no other prospects. Will wasn’t sure if he liked that.

“Why have you not chosen to find such love in the human populace?” Hannibal continued, pressing.

Alana. Will stopped moving, the weight of crushing disappointment and self-loathing turning the contents of his stomach to lead.

“I try. You know that.”

“Alana Bloom,” Hannibal sniffed distastefully. “She is hardly a good counterpoint to you, Will. You need someone who can appreciate the darker sides to your gift as well as the socially beneficial ones. You need someone that will work with you to conquer your demons, not someone who selfishly runs from their consequences.”

Someone like you, you mean? Will thought. He didn't voice that, though; he doubted Hannibal would take kindly to such jabs, and he wasn't sure he was ready to handle the implications of such a statement. Besides, Hannibal couldn't have meant himself. Right? Will shook his head, clearing his thoughts.

"Maybe you're right," he sighed. "Alright, what's next?"

Hannibal had the entire backyard to do, and Will refused to let himself hide away in his room any longer. He was a fully grown male, a fucking special agent for Christ's sake; he could handle watching an attractive man mow his lawn.

He followed Hannibal into his backyard and searched for something to do. He eyed a sparse patch of weeds and had an idea. He went into his garage, grabbed his rake and shovel, and got to work.

An hour later, a shadow fell over his little patch of earth. Will looked up and found Hannibal standing close behind him, looking over his work.

"What is this?" Hannibal asked, though the answer was obvious.

"Um, I thought I might have a garden," Will replied, scratching at his neck. "You know, tomatoes and cucumbers and, I dunno, rosemary, or something."

Hannibal smiled approvingly. "A smart idea, Will. Perhaps it will prompt you to use your kitchen more frequently."


"That's very considerate of you," Hannibal said, oblivious to Will's inner turmoil. Hopefully. "You're correct; it is difficult to acquire fresh produce in the city. If you don't mind, I would like to make some suggestions for seeds to plant. You will, of course, be invited to any meal in which I use your ingredients."

Hannibal smirked a moment, caught in a joke that Will didn't understand. Will didn't mind; understanding Hannibal Lecter would take a far better man than he. "Well, I'm going to finish turning this soil," Will said. "I'll go out and buy peat pots and topsoil tomorrow, and, if you get me a list of seeds you want, I'll get those, too."

"I'll do that when I go inside," Hannibal promised. The approving twinkle in his eye had grown,
and Will tried not to be too pleased with himself. This was the best he'd felt in months, gritty dirt pressed underneath his fingernails and tiny ants crawling along his ankles. He felt sane.

Hannibal finished mowing just as the sun was starting to set, the orange light glowing on his damp skin. Will couldn't even pretend that Hannibal wasn't beautiful, effulgent in a world of dying light and growing darkness. How could three-piece suits hide so much beauty?

Will finished hacking at the firm soil, discarding large rocks into a pile he'd created a few yards away. The garden wasn't large, but it would house a nice selection of plants, if Will could keep them alive. Hannibal headed into the house and Will, now sweaty and covered in swipes of mud, followed him. Hannibal quickly wrote out a list of seeds he wanted in easy, flowing script and handed it to Will. Cilantro, chives, burpless cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, turnips, garlic, parsley, and other things that would be easy to find. It seemed simple enough.

Chapter End Notes

Hi guys! So this was supposed to be a little rough-and-tumble fic to get me out of my fluff-funk. It didn't work. Instead, I've written the longest, cutest, sexiest (at least I think so) story I've ever written. I actually had the original idea when I was push mowing, but everything started fleshing itself out as I did indoor repairs. Yeah, I'm helping to rebuild a house. It was good research. ;)

Thank you to the amazing, perfect backwards-blackbird on Tumblr, who is a good friend of mine in real life and a brilliant beta-writer. If you guys see any remaining errors, please do leave me a note in the comments. Thank you so much!
Chapter 2

Will arrived home in the late morning. He had driven out to the Tractor Supply Company in Manassas and bought everything on his list, plus a few packets of seeds that he wanted to plant. He unloaded the trunk of his car and hefted all the bags of dirt to the garden.

When Hannibal arrived, Will was mixing topsoil with peat. The mixture created a porous, nutritious blend that absorbed water easily, and it was important to coat the garden in it so that the plants would be able to grow rapidly. After he had finished mixing the soils together, Will led Hannibal into the kitchen to show him the rest of his purchases. Hannibal picked up a dried pod of peat, looking at it curiously.

"It's peat," Will explained. "You moisten it and it expands into a little pod for your seeds. It's great for germination."

"Of course," Hannibal tossed the peat back into its box. He acted as if he had known all along what a peat pod was, but Will knew the doctor just well enough to see under his façade.

"It's okay to not know things, you know," Will chided him gently. "I don't expect you to know everything, and you shouldn't pretend to do so."

Hannibal said nothing. Inwardly smiling, Will rolled up his sleeves. "Would you like to help me get all of the seeds arranged?"

"I am yours to command," Hannibal offered. Will tried not to think too hard on that.

"Great. Do you want to wet the pods, or do you want to put the seeds in?"

Hannibal took the more familiar route. "I can place the seeds."

"Okay," Will agreed, hiding his amusement. He gave Hannibal the bag of packets. "Two per pod, and let's start with two pods for each kind of plant. Sound good?"

Will set the box of pods down next to the sink and dampened one. The disc of what felt like sawdust quickly expanded, growing into a cylinder of mushy dirt. He gave the pod to Hannibal. "Now you just take two seeds, put them in the center of the pod, and push them in a little. Then you just put it back in its place in the box."

Hannibal took the peat carefully, squishing it a little with his fingertips. Will turned away to hide...
his smile: how on Earth did Hannibal Lecter have any right to be so goddamned adorable? He was a middle-aged man that enjoyed opera and dry wine, for crying out loud. Still, Will was thrilled to have this chance to see Hannibal try something new. He looked like a little boy in a suit. God.

The men worked in silence until Hannibal encountered the seeds Will had picked out for himself. "Pumpkin seeds? Do you wish to have Jack-o'-lanterns come Halloween?" Hannibal asked lightly.

"Oh hush," Will retorted, smiling. It was true: he hadn't gotten to carve a pumpkin in years, and seeing the seeds felt like too good of an opportunity to pass up. "You can have the guts and seeds. I'm sure you can find some old European recipe that will turn them to edible gold or something."

"I know many recipes that call for guts," Hannibal mused, "though few are of the pumpkin variety." Will laughed, causing Hannibal to smile slightly. Why have we never felt so comfortable around each other? Will wondered. Maybe he pushed the older man away because he had always felt like he was being analyzed. How stupid of him.

Once all the seeds were planted, Will put the plastic top on the box. "It's like a little greenhouse," he explained. "In three or so days, we'll have sprouts to plant."

They went back outside to the garden. "Did you have a plan for the day?" Will asked Hannibal.

"Not as such, no," Hannibal responded. "I had hoped that you might have constructed a plan for yourself. I do not wish to force any decisions on you; it would be counter-productive."

Will considered that. "Well, I haven't really planned much, but we can walk through the house and think of things as we go."

It turned out that Will wanted to change most of his house. He had never really liked the previous owner's taste in decor, but he had never felt a strong urge to alter anything. His house was a home for his dogs and place for his bed.

Hannibal hadn't liked that one bit. "You should not restrict the happinesses in your life because you do not wish to make the efforts to achieve them," he admonished. Will felt embarrassed, and he quickly made redecorating the house a priority on the list.

It turned out they had a lot of work ahead of them, but both men were excited to start as soon as possible. Redesigning a house had a certain power to it, a power that spoke to better living and greater health. Will and Hannibal sat in the living room (Hannibal had tried to brush the dog hair off the couch, but he might as well have been scooping droplets out of an ocean) and constructed a schedule for the next few weeks. They would start in Will's bedroom (and he'd just organized, dammit!) and work their way through the house. Tomorrow.

Hannibal invited Will to stay at his house in Baltimore while they were working on the bedroom. Will had initially protested—he had a sofa, after all—but Hannibal refused to take no for an answer. Will packed his essentials in a duffle and, after filling his dogs' food bowls for the night, he left with his psychiatrist.

Funny, but Will had almost forgotten that Hannibal was, in fact, his doctor. After just two days of working with him around the house, Will felt that their relationship was different, somehow. They weren't friends, necessarily, but they were... something. Will didn't care enough to label it.

They arrived at Hannibal's house in the late afternoon, and Hannibal immediately took to his kitchen to prepare dinner. Will wondered what they'd be eating that night. Hannibal wasn't prepared for a guest, after all, and his meals were usually very planned out.
Will walked into the kitchen, intending to help, and froze momentarily. Hannibal was already engrossed in his job, kneading some kind of dough onto his heavily-floured countertop. It wasn't the actual task that had captivated Will, however, but rather how Hannibal executed it. The doctor had rolled up his shirtsleeves and tied an apron around himself, which should have looked silly, but it didn't. Not at all. He was working the dough roughly, leaning his full weight on it to squash it. The muscles in his forearms tensed periodically, cording into thick bands under the man's skin.

Will watched in awe, baffled. Hannibal was far more dressed than he'd been yesterday, but he was infinitely more attractive here, in his element. Hannibal's face was scrunch in concentration, his hair just barely falling over his eye. Will's breath stuck in his throat. He had never wanted someone so badly in his entire life.

Hannibal looked up, catching his eye, and Will had to push down a moan. Hannibal continued to work the dough, leaning forward just to ease back, pushing up onto his toes at times, eyes locked with Will's.

"Did you want to help?" Hannibal purred, and Will wasn't sure what he was supposed to help with, exactly, but yes.

"Huh?" Wow. Articulate, Graham.

"If you want to cut the meat into chunks, it's right there," Hannibal tilted his head to a cut of meat on a cutting board. Will moved on autopilot, focused on the way Hannibal's eyes crinkled as he walked by. Definitely amused, then. God. Will hadn't been this continually embarrassed since high school, when he'd had that crush on Cassie Summers. Only this was his psychiatrist, and Will was no adolescent.

He sliced the meat into chunks, taking out his frustration on his task. Hannibal came over to collect the cubes, tossing them in a pot with vegetables and some sort of stock.

"Shepherd's Pie," Hannibal said, answering Will's unspoken question. "It's simple and hearty, and it goes well with burgundy. Would you get the Grand Cru from the pantry, please?"

Will found the wine and uncorked it, allowing it to breathe. He wasn't completely uneducated, after all. He watched Hannibal take the bottom crust—a perfect golden-brown—out of the oven, pour the thick stew into the crust, and top it all with another layer of crust, slicing into the dough before placing it back in the oven. "We have thirty minutes. I can make dessert, or we can discuss your budding attraction to me. Your choice."

Will blinked. What? Was he that obvious? It had only been a day! "Uh," he said, clearing his throat. "Let's make dessert?"

Hannibal smirked. "I thought you might say that. If you would, I need you to take two apples from the refrigerator and core them."

Will did as he was told, watching out of the corner of his eye as Hannibal measured out two cups of the wine and poured it into a small pot. He added sticks of cinnamon and brown sugar, then put the mixture on a low heat.

"When you’ve finished with the apples," he said to Will, "put them in here, and try to keep them upright." He put a lid on the pot and began mixing together what looked like another dough. More pie? That seemed rather unimaginative, considering the source.

Will cored the apples to the best of his ability (he had to scrape seeds out of both of them after he’d
finished) and placed them carefully in the pot. The liquid just covered their tops and, if Will hadn’t seen Hannibal making more dough, he’d have thought they were just making baked apples. Will wasn’t sure what culinary trick Hannibal had hidden in his sleeve, what extra “next step” would elevate the dessert to a ‘Hannibal-worthy’ dessert, but Will was excited to see what happened. He washed his hand quickly, turning to watch Hannibal work. What he saw made him curse himself.

Hannibal was kneading dough again. God, why hadn’t Will thought of that before he rushed through his duties? He could have taken more time to get the seeds out, and he’d have avoided watching Hannibal dominate a hunk of wet flour again. That’s what it looked like, anyway; Hannibal would roll the dough into a ball, then squash it flat. Again and again, he pushed the dough down into submission.

And wow, if Will’s thoughts were that pornographic over his psychiatrist making dessert, maybe he should have chosen to talk about his feelings.

Hannibal finished making dough, allowing Will to watch him in silence as he put it in the fridge then checked on the apples.

“These will take another few minutes,” Hannibal announced. “Perhaps we should discuss—” oh, please, no “—what you would like to do in your bedroom tomorrow.” Will breathed a sigh of relief.

“And I was thinking we would move the dressers and stuff out into the hallway and push my bed to the middle so we can start taking down the wallpaper,” he said. Immediately, he wanted to suggest that maybe they could take a break on the bed, if need be, but such a comment would be highly unproductive, and Will really wasn’t interested in discussing his libido with Hannibal.

“That’s a fine plan. What are your intentions after we take down the wallpaper?” Hannibal asked.

“I’d like to paint it. Something warm, I think,” Will mused. “Or maybe blue. That’s a bridge we can cross when we come to it.”

“So be it. If I were in your shoes? I would paint it a golden taupe. Warm, neutral colors help to evoke positive emotions, and they do not allow for such strong shadows at night.”

“Okay,” Will replied, “but I still want to get everything else done before I make a final decision.”

“I believe our apples are almost done,” Hannibal said in lieu of a reply. He checked them with a fork and apparently liked what he saw, because he took the pot off the stove and placed it on a trivet on the island. Hannibal took off the lid to let the apples cool as he rolled the cooled dough flat then carved two large circles out of it. He removed the apples from the pot and placed one in the center of each circle of dough. He then scooped up the dough from underneath, folding it around the soft apple and pinching it at the top to form a sphere. He did the same with the other apple, then coated them in an egg glaze before placing both pastries onto a cookie sheet and sliding them into his oven, underneath the Shepherd’s pie.

“My apple dumplings are rather unconventional,” Hannibal informed Will, “but I think you’ll find them to your liking.”

“I was wondering what they were,” Will confessed lamely. Hannibal offered him a quick smile before turning back to the leavings of wine and cinnamon in the pot. He put it back on the stove but did not relight it. He would come back to it later, Will realized.

The Shepherd’s pie was done a few minutes later, and Will helped Hannibal set the table as it
rested. Luckily Will didn’t have to remember too many types of silverware setting due to the simplicity of the meal. He speculated whether Hannibal was making simple meals on purpose, or if he normally cooked easy things and just showed off for company. Will couldn’t decide which was more flattering; was it better to be catered to, or to be on the “inside” where Hannibal didn’t feel the need to impress him?

It didn’t really matter. Hannibal scooped a portion of pie onto Will’s plate, then onto his own, and the stuff practically oozed scrumptiousness. Will dug in, promptly burning his tongue. Hannibal smirked, but said nothing.

The two ate in silence—Will’s next few bites were cautious—until Hannibal decided to start a conversation.

“So, Will,” he said, using his knife to clean some sauce off his fork, “perhaps now we can discuss your attraction to me, and how it will affect our relationship.”

Will choked on his pie. “Excuse me?” he spluttered. “It—it won’t! I’m not a teenage boy, Hannibal. I am in control of my libido.”

“You lost control of your mind when you started sleepwalking and hallucinating. I am your psychiatrist first, Will, and you would do well to remember that. I do not want you to promise to control yourself. That is not healthy for you during this time in your life, and it will not aid in your recovery. I do not toil away my hours in your house for no reason. You are my friend, Will, and I want your mental health to return to you. So I would like to discuss your feelings toward me, whatever they are.”

Will took a sip of his wine, stalling for time. He was so not prepared for this conversation. “Okay,” he hedged. “I am… I am attracted to you. End of story. You’re a good-looking man, Hannibal, you should know that. I do not expect anything from you, and I am content with our relationship the way it is.”

“But you want something from me, even if you do not expect it,” Hannibal said. “And that will impair your ability to be ‘content’ with our relationship. I am afraid I cannot allow that to happen. Our friendship, like many others, depends on communication to thrive. I need you to be honest with me, Will, just as you need you to be honest with me.”

“I’m not sure what you want!” Will snapped, throwing his fork to his plate in resignation. The food had turned to ash in his mouth, anyway. “You’re helping me completely rebuild my house for no reason. You’re mowing my lawn and inviting me into your house and cooking me fucking Shepherd’s pie and I have no idea why. But I can tell you that it’s not helping my sanity, Hannibal. You are driving me insane with your sweat and your arms and your jeans and you kneading that fucking dough. Did you honestly expect me not to be attracted to you?”

Hannibal took a sip of his wine, unruffled. “I wouldn’t say I expected it, no. Considering your infatuation with Alana Bloom, I had assumed you were at least mostly heterosexual. If I had known that cutting your grass in casual clothes would affect you so intensely, I would not have done so.”

“No!” Will shouted. “I don’t want this! You don’t understand! You shouldn’t have to, to… restrain yourself around me. I just—I just need to know why.”

“Why what? Why I am choosing to help you?” Hannibal’s tone was still smooth, composed. Will hated him for it. “You are falling apart, Will, whether you see it or not. Your world is collapsing in on itself, and you are content to breathe in its destruction. I, however, am not. You allow yourself
to live in squalor, you hardly eat, and you would rather suffer through a one-sided infatuation with your psychiatrist than talk to him about it. I am paid to listen to you, and yet you refuse to communicate. If I can do something, anything, to revitalize a patient—especially one that catches murderers for a living—then I have a moral and professional obligation to do so. As well as a personal one.

“Why am I helping you to rebuild your home? You are unhappy there. I am unhappy there, and I have only been to your house on two occasions. I believe what I said, Will. Reorganizing your physical realm will help you to reorganize your thoughts, and it will strengthen your claim on sanity.

“Lastly, your attraction to me. I did not expect it; that is true. This does not mean that I am unhappy with this turn of events. You are an attractive man, too, Will, and I have no preconceived notions of heterosexuality. I have been attracted to you for quite a while. If I had not learned to master my emotions at an early age, I have no doubt that I would be in a far worse state than you right now.”

Will was absolutely speechless. The very concept of language failed him for several seconds, so stunned by Hannibal’s confession was he. “I—” he tried. His voice wasn’t working. “I—I—what, now?”

Will was instantly embarrassed, though, honestly, the feeling of shame never seemed to fully fade around Hannibal. Here was his doctor, reciprocating his attraction and practically telling him that he was spending days upon days at Will’s house to make him happier, and Will couldn’t even say thank you.

“Thank you,” he blurted. No, that wasn’t right, either, and now Hannibal looked confused. Fuck it all.

“Listen, Hannibal, I’m a mess,” the words poured out of Will in a torrent. “I’ve never been in a successful relationship, I see murder scenes during sex, and I can barely hold a conversation without imagining the other person dead. I can’t tell you how I feel because I can’t—” his voice broke and he had to stop for a moment to calm himself, “—I can’t lose you, too. I can’t see your head on top of a totem pole of bodies. I can’t see you stabbed from eyes to toes with deer antlers. I can’t see your back carved up into angel wings. I can’t imagine killing you, feeling that absolute rush of power as I slit your throat—I can’t do it! Not to you.”

Hannibal finally stopped acting cool and collected. His eyes were alight with curiosity and concern. “I think perhaps it is time we finished making dessert,” he decided. They hadn’t remotely finished dinner, but it was cold, anyway.

Will’s face twisted into a mirthless grin. “Yeah, let’s make dessert,” he said.

The apples were mostly done. Hannibal added a large amount of brown sugar to the leavings and cooked it over a low flame until the sugar caramelized the sauce to a glaze. He plated the apples and poured the glaze over each pastry. They looked beautiful, but Will couldn’t appreciate them. He had just confessed to things that he hadn’t even realized he’d been feeling, and Hannibal was acting like nothing was wrong. Fucking typical.

They sat back down at the table, and Hannibal sliced into his apple. Steam poured out, causing the entire room to smell of fruit and spices: yet another beauty Will couldn’t acknowledge because he was too angry at his psychiatrist to notice.

“Will, I cannot promise you that I will not die. In fact, my death is an eventuality promised to me by Fate herself. But I can promise you that neither you, nor any other serial killer, will be my
murderer. You know that I have been attacked, and by someone that took down two police officers in a matter of minutes. I am not just a psychiatrist, Will, nor am I just a surgeon. My life is very complex. It is not something you ought to know—I fear your nightmares would only get worse—but you do need to recognize that I am a fully-grown man that took down a psychopath that wanted to kill me. That is the only comfort I can give you, I’m afraid. I can reassure you, though, that you will not imagine murder scenes when you have sex with me.”

“When,” not “if.” God, that was sexy. “Maybe we should just eat these apples, for now,” Will suggested hoarsely. “And we can discuss sex tomorrow, or something.”

Hannibal grinned. It was the first time Will had seen such an honest emotion on the man’s face. It suited him. “Bon appétit,” he replied smoothly, taking a bite of dumpling.

Will could have cried in relief. On a list of his most honest, awkward conversations, this beat out “The Talk” by about three hundred percent. Jesus fucking Christ.

The apple dumpling was delicious, which meant Will had somehow regained his sense of taste. The dark wine baked into the apples was a reminder of the entrée, a savory undertone to an otherwise sweet dish. Even in simplistic, hurried cooking, Hannibal was an artist. Perhaps he could work Will into a piece of art, yet.

Will wasn’t sure if it was the rich food or the emotional duress of their version of table talk, but he was exhausted. Tomorrow would be a new day, and maybe Will’s head would clear overnight, so he could think about Hannibal’s words more carefully. He begged off whiskey sours in the parlor and made his way to the guest room.

It was beautiful and classy, as was everything in Hannibal’s home. Will wished he had the eye for such fine taste. As it was, he could pair plaid with polka dots and feel accomplished. Will took off his clothes and piled them into his duffle, collapsing onto the soft bed in nothing but his boxers. Today had been too long of a day to worry about things like pajamas.

He crawled under the sheets that felt like the hair off an angel’s back (he needed sleep very badly, it seemed) and closed his eyes, willing his dreams to relent for one night.

Chapter End Notes

Well, things are progressing a bit, aren't they? Poor Will, still tortured, but in a slightly better way than canon, no? ;)

If you see any errors that I or backwards_blackbird might have missed, please do comment. Thanks for reading!

(Side-note: After seeing Hannibal's indoor herb garden in Rotí, I'm happy I decided to give him one at Will's. That thing was sad-looking!)
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

Hello again! Chapter 3!

Beta'd by the awesome backwards_blackbird on Tumblr.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

[He crawled under the sheets that felt like the hair off an angel’s back (he needed sleep very badly, it seemed) and closed his eyes, willing his dreams to relent for one night.]

They, of course, did not. They didn’t involve murderers, though. No, instead, Hannibal trekked across his subconscious like a devilish Romeo, offering up that amused grin, only now it was paired with heated eyes. In Will’s dreams, Hannibal laid Will open like a sweet instrument to be played, where Will’s pleasure was the symphony and Hannibal was the conductor. Song after song was torn from Will’s lips, each moan a refrain of melody and each gasp a rhythmic crescendo. And always, Hannibal grinning that devil’s grin up at him.

Will awoke painfully aroused and exceedingly frustrated. He didn’t feel rested at all. Images of a sly, hungry Hannibal refused to leave his thoughts: watching him try to stave off his persistent erection, watching him fail miserably, watching him jerk off into the toilet with harsh, needy, stifled moans.

Will crumbled onto the thousand-something thread count sheets and rode the aftershocks of his orgasm. He lie there, fighting the shame and forbidden thrill that came with masturbating in someone else’s house. He had just come in Hannibal’s house, into Hannibal’s toilet, picturing Hannibal giving him a grin. That was some kind of fucked up.

He didn’t move until the irresistible smell of bacon wafted in from downstairs. Bacon. Will heaved himself off the bed and got dressed in what he hoped was appropriate attire to strip wallpaper. He shuffled downstairs blearily, pretending to have just woken up. Hannibal was tending to a pan that was sizzling and bubbling. Will came up to peer over his shoulder. He was both surprised and proud when the doctor tensed slightly at his proximity, even if it was for a moment.

“Good morning, Will,” Hannibal greeted, his accent rough. If Will hadn’t spent the majority of his night hearing Hannibal’s voice race through his head, he wouldn’t have been able to hear the slight purr behind it now. Will was suddenly glad he had just come; at least he wouldn’t have any inappropriate boners during breakfast.

“Morning,” Will replied, his voice gruff with sleep. “Coffee?”

Hannibal tilted his head toward the carafe and delicate cup sitting on the island. A small jug of cream and a little pot of sugar stood next to the carafe, but Will ignored those, preferring the tangy, honest flavor of black coffee to the sweet, coy taste of it sweetened and white. And wow, this was some good coffee.

“Where on Earth did you get this?” Will asked reverently.
“The coffee? One of my friends from my time as a surgeon developed her own coffee roasting business. She sends me packages every once in a while.” Hannibal moved the pan over to the island and scooped slices of bacon onto a pile of paper towels. He then began mixing something together in a bowl. “How did you sleep, Will?”

“Great,” Will said. It sounded false to his own ears, and he winced a little. “You?”

“I found my sleep troubled,” Hannibal said. “It seems our conversation lingered in me more than I had imagined it would.”

“… Ah,” Will replied. Really, how were you supposed to respond to that? *Oh, really? Well, in that case, let me tell you about how I choked the chicken thinking about your smile.* No. No, no, no.

Hannibal smiled up at Will, a self-deprecating flash of teeth that Will could add to his list of ‘expressions that shouldn’t be sexy but are on Hannibal Lecter.’ This list was continually growing, it seemed. “I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable before breakfast. I was hoping to wait until at least lunch to discomfit you.”

It took Will a second to realize that that was a joke. He cracked a grin, small chuckles growing into a full laugh. Really, how ridiculous could this get? When he calmed, he saw Hannibal watching him with an almost fond look in his eyes. Will grew warm.

“If you would,” Hannibal requested, tilting the bowl to scrape at its contents, “take out the blueberries and blackberries from the fruit crisper?” Will did as he was told and placed them on the island, near Hannibal.

“No, we’ll need them over here,” Hannibal said, moving the boxes next to the stove. “Would you like to learn how to make fruit syrup?”

Will didn’t have much of a choice, not when Hannibal looked at him so expectantly. “Of course,” he responded. Hannibal’s lips twitched, as if he was trying to hide a smirk—which, of course, he was.

“Join me,” Hannibal said. When Will moved to follow his command, Hannibal stepped in close behind him, regarding the cookware from over his shoulder. “The first thing you do is put two tablespoons of butter into the pan and turn the heat on low,” Hannibal said quietly. Will felt as if his heat had been turned on low as he moved to do as Hannibal said.

“Melt the butter, and keep stirring it so it doesn’t burn,” Hannibal continued, handing Will a spatula. “Now, add four tablespoons of brown sugar, just like that.”

Will’s neck was heating. Hannibal’s proximity was causing his ears to roar, and yet it felt like total silence. His hands itched, but whether it was from an urge to pull the older man closer or to push him away, Will didn’t know. He refused to find out.

“Now you need to let the sugar melt, and keep stirring,” Hannibal breathed. “You’re doing well, Will.” Was something on fire? Was he on fire? Something was really hot. Maybe he was on fire.

“Good, see how that’s thickened a bit? Now you add the berries. A small handful of each should suffice.” Will added the berries. “Now you fold the berries into the sugar.”

Do what now? Will couldn’t fold sugar. What? He moved the spatula over the berries indecisively.

“Here, let me show you.” Hannibal moved even closer to Will, so his front was aligned with Will’s back, and grasped Will’s hands. As a parent would teach their children, Hannibal guided Will’s
hand through the motions of folding. It seemed simple, now that Hannibal was doing it, but it was also far more complicated than Will could handle right now. Hannibal was pressed up against him, in a kitchen, surrounded by food that they were cooking together. It sounded like a sex scene in the making. Will wasn’t sure he was ready for that.

Hannibal wasn’t, either, it seemed, because he moved away shortly after. “Now just pour the syrup onto the crepes, and breakfast is done.” Crepes? When had Hannibal made those? But there they were, perfectly trifolded, with a creamy sauce peeking out from the inside. Will poured the dark, lush, purple syrup over the crepes. They looked beautiful. Hannibal stood next to him and sprinkled powdered sugar over the syrup. Okay, now they looked beautiful.

They took their breakfast to the dining room and began to eat. “Do you know what is involved in removing wallpaper?” Hannibal asked Will as he cut his crepe with delicate precision. Surgeon’s hands. Will tried not to imagine other ways those fingers could be precise.

“Um, yeah, I looked it up a couple days ago,” Will said after he’d finished his bite of crepe. They were great, as Hannibal’s cooking was always, but they tasted even better knowing that Will had created the syrup. He’d contributed substantially. It felt good. It felt healthy. “We have a couple of options. I think my wallpaper has a peelable top layer, which is unfortunate. We have to peel away the top layer, but there’s a second layer that’s harder to remove. We need to soften the adhesive and peel that layer off in strips. Now, they make wallpaper strippers, but apparently they have a very sharp smell, and I’m not sure I should use that with my dogs. The second option is using fabric softener, which apparently works about the same, but at least it smells good.”

“I have no problem with acrid odors—spending a year of my residency cleaning bedpans made me impervious to such discomforts—but we can do whatever you wish,” Hannibal said.

“Okay. Well, I have some fabric softener at home, but we might want to buy a second bottle just in case,” Will said, crunching into his bacon. Hannibal watched him eat his bacon with a secret sort of smile, and Will chose not to read into it. Deciphering Hannibal Lecter was getting more difficult as Will got to know him more, and it was a startling sort of comfort for the empath. It felt normal, like Hannibal was a human, not a storyline of causes and effects.

They finished their breakfast and washed the dishes together, Hannibal soaping and rinsing while Will dried. It was peaceful and normal, and Will wished he could spend every morning that way.

They stopped by a store on the way to the house so Will could buy a bottle of fabric softener. The cashier, a plump, middle-aged woman, looked between Hannibal and Will with a strangely fond expression as she rang them out. “Aren’t you two just the sweetest,” she asked, handing them their receipt.

Will spluttered, but luckily Hannibal was as poised as ever. “Thank you,” he said graciously, “have a nice day.” He led Will out of the shop with a light hand on the small of his back. The cashier sighed behind them.

Will turned on Hannibal the moment they were out of earshot. “What was that?” he demanded, not quite angry but not quite calm.

“That was a sign of the impending social freedom of sexual orientation,” Hannibal replied, his voice only faintly tinged with confusion.

“No, I mean, why didn’t you correct her? We aren’t a couple!” Will stammered over the word. Hannibal gave him a cool look.
“Then what are we, Will? To the eyes of society, we look like a couple. So, unless you wished for me to explain to that nice woman that you are a mentally unstable man and I am your psychiatrist, I see nothing wrong with the way I reacted.”


“It is perfectly fine, Will. You have a right to question me, just as I have a right to chastise you when those questions are foolish. Now come, we have work to do.”

They drove the rest of the way to Will’s house in comfortable silence. Hannibal had tuned the radio to the classical channel, and soothing strains of Brahms filled the car, which provided just enough background noise to put the two men at ease.

Will’s dogs were thrilled to see him, and Will instantly felt guilty. Luckily, none of them had accidents while he was gone. He really didn’t want to see how Hannibal would have reacted to that. Lucy, a beagle mutt that he’d found a little over a year ago, sniffed at Hannibal’s ankle and wagged her tail up at him hopefully. To Will’s astonishment, Hannibal bent down and stroked over her fur softly. Lucy leaned into the touch, pressing herself against Hannibal’s leg.

Hannibal looked up at Will, who was still watching him in awe. “What?”

Wills shook his head. "I thought you weren't a dog person."

"Your dogs are kind animals. While many times I find dogs to be unfavorable contributions to a home, what with their barking and their begging, your strays here do neither. They have let a stranger into their home without a single complaint. We left them alone for hours, and they have not seen you since yesterday. They deserve some affection," said Hannibal, scratching lightly behind Lucy's ears. She closed her eyes in delight. "Look at this dog. She expects nothing from you, other than the basic essentials of food and shelter. If I had not petted her, she would not have minded, but she appreciates the attention now that I have offered it. I am surprised you cannot see the analogy."

Will's face heated. "Are you calling me a dog?" he hissed.

"I could serve you far greater an insult, but no. I am saying that you, like your dog, demand nothing from humanity, but you will accept whatever it gives you. That is a compliment."

"Oh," Will said, feeling stupid. "Thanks."

Hannibal straightened. "You're welcome. Now, I believe we have a wall to uncover."

The men walked into the house and up to Will's room, Lucy following them dutifully. "You made a friend," Will teased.

"So did she," Hannibal replied. Will didn't know how to respond to that.

They unloaded their supplies onto the floor and started moving the furniture away from the walls. Will watched Hannibal take off his jacket and roll up his sleeves. "Are you seriously wearing a suit and tie for this?" he asked disbelievingly.

"I was under the impression that casual clothes made you uncomfortable," Hannibal said with a raised eyebrow.

"Your suits are worth more than my comfort," Will tsked. "Be comfortable. Keep your suit clean. I
"Very well," Hannibal agreed. He left the room and went back downstairs, Lucy trailing behind him. Where was he going? Will wondered. He hadn't actually brought extra clothes with him, had he? Will been prepared to loan him some old clothes that might fit.

Apparently he had, because when Hannibal walked back into Will's room he donned a pair of worn jeans and a scrubby t-shirt.

"It's so weird," Will whispered just loud enough for Hannibal to hear, "how different you look out of your shell."

Hannibal pulled at the hem of his shirt. "I suppose the same could be said of anyone," he said, eyeing Will.

Will inclined his head, agreeing, and the two men got to work. Hannibal was stronger than Will had expected, lifting and shoving furniture with surprising ease. Will wondered how he had developed such musculature. Did he work out? Did he— nope, that thought was inappropriate, let's stop.

It took them maybe ten minutes to move the furniture out in the hallway. They pushed the bed to the center of the room and Will was reminded of his thoughts yesterday. Had it only been yesterday? It felt like a lifetime ago.

Hannibal would look good on his bed, especially in those clothes. And that was more inappropriateness. Stop.

Peeling back the top layer of wallpaper was easy, once they got it started. Strip by strip, Americana flowers were torn from the walls to reveal a fuzzy, yellow paper. This was the paper they would have to soak in fabric softener. Will consulted his notes.

"Okay, we have to mix fabric softener and water fifty-fifty, and we spray that on the walls. But it says here we should score the paper first to make it more absorbent. How about you start scoring, and I'll get the solution ready?"

Hannibal wordlessly withdrew a pocket knife from his jeans and started carving careful holes in the paper. Will watched him work for a moment before going down to the kitchen, where he started mixing solution in spray bottles. He was done a few minutes later, and he carried the full bottles back up to the bedroom. Hannibal had gotten a large section of wall done, considering the amount of time Will had been gone, and Will was pleased to see that the paper absorbed the solution easily.

He sprayed everything Hannibal had done so far. Apparently, you were supposed to spray large chunks of wall and wait for the solution to do its chemical magic, and then the paper practically fell away.

It didn't quite work as well as Will had hoped. While it wasn't difficult to peel the strips of soggy paper away, they weren't very large strips, so Will had a lot of work to do. Hannibal finished scoring the walls and moved to help Will. After a few minutes, the sweet perfume of the fabric softener became overpowering, and Will had to open a window.

It was monotonous, stripping away the old paper, and Will found himself settling into a gentle sort of peace. Snag, peel, rip. Snag, peel, rip.

The only sign of the passing time was Will's increase in hunger. When it felt like every soft rrrripp
was accompanied by a stomach grumble, he stopped working and turned to Hannibal.

“I’m hungry, what about you?” he asked Hannibal.

Hannibal looked over him once. “Starving.”

They took a break to get lunch. Hannibal had brought another cooler of deli food, so they ate sandwiches and discussed how much longer they would need to work.

“I think it’s coming along very well, don’t you?” Hannibal asked.

“Definitely.” Will grinned. “We can finish that today easily. I decided to go with the taupe, by the way. I trust your taste.”

“Very well,” said Hannibal, his eyes warm. “I think we should continue to remove the wallpaper, however, before we begin painting. You might be forced to stay at my house for a few more nights.”

“What, more free food and ridiculously soft beds?” Will asked sarcastically. “I mean, if I have to. I guess.”

Hannibal smirked. “If only the company were better, you might enjoy it more.”

“Told the words right out of my mouth,” Will sighed dramatically. “I mean, really, if I have to have one more stimulating conversation, I think I might die.”

Hannibal laughed, startling Will. He still wasn’t used to seeing the doctor so uninhibited, and it thrilled him to see how much Hannibal was opening up. “How tragic. Ah, my friend is back.”

Lucy had found her way into the kitchen and sat so that she was pressed up against Hannibal’s shoe. He bent down to ruffle her fur, tickling at her chin when she licked at his fingers.

“Her name’s Lucy,” Will said suddenly, remembering his manners. “I found her when she was just a puppy. Someone had just dropped her at the side of the road.”

“Humans are the cruelest of beasts,” Hannibal remarked. “It is inspiring to see a man such as yourself choose to take in dogs in need.”

“What do you mean, ‘a man such as me?’” Will asked. He wasn’t upset—he was past the point of thinking that Hannibal would ever mean him offense—but he was curious.

“Will, you have chosen perhaps one of the most difficult careers in the world. Every day, you must confront the worst types of human imaginable and step into their minds. You must become the very thing you hate, daily, and you must go to bed at night riddled with secondhand psychosis. And what do you do with such a miserable life? You survive. You take in stray dogs because they need you, and because they cannot comprehend the darkness into which you must gaze. You are an admirable man, Will Graham. Lucy is one of several witnesses to that.”

Will was honestly touched. “I, I’m not sure what to say,” he admitted. “Here I was thinking you’re the noble one, taking two weeks out of your life to help an unstable patient.”

“Well, I never said I wasn’t admirable, as well,” Hannibal joked, and the mood was instantly light again.

Will was amazed at their ability to transition from heartfelt confessions to light-hearted banter. He
had always been socially awkward, unable to do more than answer direct questions and talk about the weather. He had never had the graces necessary to develop a rapport, yet here he was, words flowing from his brain to Hannibal’s ears in easy waves of expression.

“Well, as fun as self-entitlement can be, we have a lot of wallpaper to peel, and I, for one, am very sick of the smell of fabric softener,” Will said, putting his empty dishes in the sink.

Hannibal rose and put his dishes on top of Will’s. “Let us continue, then.”

Removing all of the wallpaper in the house took the rest of the day, and everything smelled of “blue water,” whatever that was supposed to smell like. Will wasn’t sure he ever wanted to smell it again, not after today.

They drove home—to Hannibal’s house—and Will was relieved to breathe air that didn’t smell of conditioners and artificial fragrance.

“I would offer to wash your clothes to help get rid of the smell, but I doubt it would help,” Hannibal said lightly.

Will laughed. “No, it wouldn’t. Thank you, though.”

Dinner was an easy affair. Hannibal prepared something Will wasn’t familiar with, and hearing the fluid syllables of its name didn’t exactly help. It was savory-sweet and filling, and that was all that mattered. It made him sleepy and warm, content to curl up on Hannibal’s sofa and chat for the rest of the evening about growing up in Louisiana and how different it was from Maryland. Hannibal seemed very interested in his life before the FBI, before he became haunted with the ghosts of murderers, and Will was happy to explain to him what life was like in the South.

Once Will started yawning after every other sentence, Hannibal declared it was bedtime. Will was in no position to argue. Sleep greeted him like an old friend—though Will had always seen it as an enemy—and he was amazed when he opened his eyes and couldn’t remember his dreams. He’d always remembered his dreams. What was happening to him? And why did it feel so goddamn good?

He sprang out of bed, more alive than he’d felt in years, and took out his toiletries. He’d forgotten to shower yesterday, too caught up in a haze of arousal and mortification to think about cleanliness, but today was a new day and Will felt like a new man.

He took his toiletries and the towel Hannibal had provided into the nearby bathroom, which looked like something out of a hotel that costs Will’s yearly salary per night. The shower was black marble inlaid with brushed chrome, which complemented the dusky red walls very well. Will studiously avoided looking at the toilet as he relieved himself, then he turned the shower on and waited for the water to get hot. A few seconds? It took Will’s shower three minutes to warm up!

Will sighed, frustrated at luxuries he never knew existed and would now be unable to forget, and stepped under the spray. The showerhead was large, like a watering can nozzle, and it poured directly over Will’s head. It felt like he was standing in hot rain; it was magnificent. Will almost didn’t want to wash, content to stand in the summer storm of Hannibal’s shower, but he eventually did, lathering up his hair and body with the small amount of shampoo he’d brought. The shower drummed on his shoulders, pushing at muscles just hard enough to relax them, but not hard enough to hurt.

Will lingered in the shower for as long as he could without feeling wasteful. He scrubbed a towel
through his hair, dried off most of his body, and looped the towel around his waist. He left the bathroom and turned to walk back to his room and collided with Hannibal.

The doctor grabbed Will’s arms, stabilizing him. Will looked up to apologize, but the words got stuck in his throat. Hannibal’s eyes were roving over Will’s body with a fierce hunger that made a red-hot blush creep up Will’s neck. Will breathed in, smelling Hannibal’s decadent cologne, and tried not to shiver too noticeably.

He felt Hannibal’s fingers stroke his arms gently, not letting go but not holding him tightly. Will could pull out of Hannibal’s grasp easily, if he wanted to. Will didn’t.

He leaned into Hannibal, tilting his head—and his towel slipped. Will suddenly remembered that he was in almost nothing, standing in Hannibal’s hallway. He jerked away from Hannibal and clutched at his towel, trying to hide with his hands what the cloth couldn’t. Knowing his luck, Hannibal saw everything anyway.

“Perhaps I should let you get dressed?” Hannibal asked, amused. His eyes were still hungry, feasting on Will’s chest between glances up to his face.

“No, no, that’s not necessary,” Will thought. “Yeah, we’ve got a lot of work ahead of us that probably requires at least underwear,” he said aloud, only half-joking. He would gladly stay half-naked if it kept Hannibal’s eyes like that.

Hannibal moved aside, letting Will pass. Will felt hot eyes following him and forced back a shudder. Hannibal checking out his ass was one of the hotter things Will thought he’d ever experienced.

Will got dressed reluctantly, every article of clothing feeling like a layer of armor hiding his body from Hannibal’s view. He chose not to put on his usual aftershave (and it was a horse on the bottle, thank you very much) because he knew it bothered the doctor, and he rather didn’t want to give him a reason to stay away.

The drive to Will’s house was tenser than normal, but not uncomfortable. Will wanted to wash the fabric softener off the walls before they were painted. After he was done, they would go to the hardware store and pick out paint chips for every room, then bring them back to test them in the light. Will hadn’t actually planned the second half of that, but he was happy Hannibal had suggested it. He really did want things to be perfect, now that he had spent so much time getting everything ready.

When Will and Hannibal walked into the house, Lucy rushed to greet Hannibal. He smiled, kneeling down to say hello properly. He had worn his jeans again, but he replaced his t-shirt with a black v-neck. It looked sinfully good on him, and Will marveled at how different it made him look, yet again. This shirt suggested that Hannibal was the type of man who could throw on a leather jacket and hop on a moped, racing down Italian streets to drink beer and write freeform poetry.

Well, that was specific, wasn’t it? Will shook his head at himself, walking into the kitchen to drop his jacket on the table, where he noticed tiny green shoots sticking up out of the peat pots.

“Hannibal,” he called into the living room. “Our plants germinated!”

Hannibal came in to look at the sprouts. “Awe-inspiring, is it not, how a dry seed and a little water can create life?” he mused. “Can I plant them?”

Will looked at him, surprised. “You want to plant them? That involves dirt, you know.”
“I have little to no qualms with getting dirty, Will,” Hannibal replied calmly. Will tried to ignore the euphemism. He failed, ears pinking. “I would like to plant them. It would give my senses a reprieve from the odor of fabric softener.”

“Sounds good to me,” Will shrugged. “Take the dogs with you. They could use some time outside. The garden hose is next to the air conditioner and all the tools are in the garage.”

Hannibal left, and Will released a breath he hadn’t realized he’d been holding. It would be a relief to spend some time away from Hannibal’s presence, honestly. He very much enjoyed the older man’s company, but he was accustomed to hours upon hours of alone time, and he had been feeling a little stifled under Hannibal’s watch.

Washing the walls was an easy job, but the drywall had been damaged in some areas and Will made a mental note that he would need spackle when he went to the hardware store. He ended up finishing rather quickly, so he started cleaning his kitchen for something to do.

Hannibal rushed in a half hour later. “Why did you neglect to tell me that you grow raspberries?” he asked, speaking a little more quickly than usual. To Will, who had gotten used to Hannibal’s understated range of emotions, this sounded like pure joy.

“Um, because I don’t?” Will responded, baffled slightly. “There are some wild bushes beyond the edge of my property, but I’ve never eaten any of them; wild berries are poisonous, you know.”

“Nonsense,” Hannibal waved him off, popping a berry into his mouth. He had a handful of them, Will realized, and they looked just like normal raspberries. “Here,” Hannibal offered, “have one.”

He pushed a berry onto Will’s lips and Will accepted it, tongue accidentally catching Hannibal’s fingertip. Hannibal’s eyes grew hungry again, darkening to a deep burgundy. A split second passed, tension like heavy static charging between them. Before Will could remind himself of all the reasons this was wrong, he latched onto the doctor, kissing him passionately. It felt like everything came to a halt as Will pressed his lips to Hannibal’s, and he was devastated when Hannibal’s lips felt like stone against his own. Had he misread the situation? He began pulling back, ready to apologize.

But then strong arms were wrapping around his waist, raspberries thrown on the counter, and Hannibal was kissing back, finally. Hannibal’s kisses were unlike any other that Will had ever felt; Hannibal moved forcefully, consuming Will and absorbing his passion through the union of tongues. And, oh Hannibal’s tongue was really good at that thing just then; he should do it again.

Hannibal quickly took control of the kiss, as Will had so hoped he would, and almost bent Will backwards in his ardor. Will’s hands pushed their way up Hannibal’s arms, sliding along firm, tan skin and soft, black cotton. They gripped Hannibal’s neck, fingertips brushing along the tips of his perfectly trimmed hair. Hannibal huffed a breath through his nose and twisted, and then Will was pressed against his countertop and Hannibal was shoving a leg between his, and then there was pressure right where Will needed it most. Will arched his back involuntarily, dragging his hips across Hannibal’s thigh. Hannibal shivered—he fucking shivered—and pushed against Will even harder. Will felt a responding ohmyGodHannibalhasanerectionbecauseofmewhat? press into the junction of his hip, and he broke away from the kiss, gasping.

Hannibal looked down at him, eyes unfathomably dark and lips swollen cherry-red, and moved his hands down Will’s back lightly. The tickling, promising sensation made Will’s eyes flutter closed, and he felt rather than heard Hannibal chuckle darkly.

“If I had known feeding you raspberries would cause this sort of reaction, I would have done it a
long time ago,” Hannibal purred.

“Hannibal,” Will started, clenching his eyes shut to push back his need to takehavegive, “that had very, very little to do with the raspberries.”

Hannibal chuckled again, and the warmth against Will’s front disappeared. Will opened his eyes, a protest about to leave his lips, but he froze. Hannibal had just barely moved back, but he was leaning towards Will, hands pressed into the countertop behind the younger man. The change had brought Hannibal’s scrutinizing face very close to his own, and he closed his eyes again, overwhelmed.

“And here to think, you thought they were poison,” Hannibal breathed into Will’s ear. A few moments later, the front door opened, and Will opened his eyes just in time to see Hannibal leave.

“I’m still not convinced they aren’t,” he whispered. He pressed the butt of his hand to his crotch, willing away his aching need. If anything, the pressure made it worse, and Will resigned himself to a very uncomfortable remainder of the day.

Chapter End Notes

Whew!! Who else needs some water?

As always, if you see any mistakes that I or backwards_blackbird missed, let me know.

Personal note: LeakyCon is coming up (I'm so excited!), and I will definitely be there. I know it's a long shot, but will any of you be joining me?

Thanks for reading!
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

This is it! The last 'official' chapter of Hannibal the Handyman! I think I'll save my sappiness for the epilogue, but thank you to everyone that has Kudos-ed, Subscribed, Bookmarked, or even read this fic. It's amazing that something so involved just came to me because I was push-mowing and got bored, but I don't regret a second of it.

Many, many thanks to backwards_blackbird, who beta-d all of this. She's perfect, truly.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Driving to the hardware store was torture for Will. Hannibal was sitting next to him, so close but so far away, acting like nothing had happened. Every time Will glanced over at him, all he saw was muscled arms and firm torso and he imagined—remembered—how those arms felt around him. Will yearned to feel them again.

Picking out paint chips was an exercise in frustration: Hannibal kept picking out yellowy-browns that all looked the same, and Will eventually picked out one at random and snapped, “This one, okay? This one is perfect.”

It matched the color of Hannibal’s arms precisely, Will noticed with dawning horror. Hannibal must also have realized this, because he shot Will a smirk of unbelievable smugness. Will could think of a handful of things he could do to wipe the smirk off his face, and whoa, that was a nice fantasy to have in a hardware store. Not.

Will bought a gallon of “Dried Plantain” (what kind of fucking name was that, anyway?) and whatever supplies Hannibal deemed necessary for painting. They drove home in silence, the tension in the car palpable. Will’s lust eventually faded away enough so that he could recognize what an ass he’d been all day, and he instantly felt guilty.

“I am so sorry,” he blurted out. Hannibal looked over at him, confused. “I’ve been a dick to you all day, after I promised that I could be an adult about this. Us,” he corrected hastily. “You’ve been so good about everything: helping take down my wallpaper even though it smelled like death-by-pillowcase, cooking me food, befriending my dogs… and I’ve been a total jerk this entire time. How can you still like me?”

Hannibal didn’t respond for a minute, and Will felt even worse. Maybe Hannibal hadn’t noticed how unfair Will had been acting, but now that he’d gone and pointed it out, Hannibal would surely leave. God-fucking-dammit.

“I think perhaps you misunderstand me,” Hannibal said slowly, “as a person.” This is it, Will thought wildly, now he’ll go and never come back. “I have tried repeatedly to tell you this, Will, but still you do not listen. I am helping you because I enjoy helping you. I am not indebting you to myself, and I am not wasting away my days with you. I am spending time with someone about whom I care deeply, and I am helping him to regain his strength. I endure the less pleasant jobs because, comprehensively, I am enjoying myself.
“I think you also misunderstand me as a man. I am just as affected by you as you are by me, but my disposition does not allow for me to express myself so freely. I do not begrudge you your frustration, Will. I feel it, too. I think, however, that there is a time and place for relieving this frustration, and we have not yet reached it. I would like to point out that we have not yet finished your bedroom, and you are still sleeping in my house.”

“We can wait until the end of the day,” Will finished for him.

Hopefully. The day seemed to drag on, minutes stretching into hours stretching into eons. Will continually got paint on his baseboards and ceiling, forcing Hannibal to paint the trim work before Will got his distracted hands on it. The paint was lovely, though. The sunlight streaming in through Will’s window warmed the muted brown to a rich bronze, and Will admired how well it really did match Hannibal’s skin.

Perhaps he wasn’t so bad with color, after all.

Dinner that night was rich and heady, and Will knew Hannibal had crafted it that way on purpose. The thick, tangy sauces were tantalizing, complementing the salty meat in such a way that it tasted like clean, musky, gorgeous sweat.

How food could be arousing, Will would probably never know; but he was being seduced by dinner, and it was working. By the time Will had cleaned his plate, he was yearning for Hannibal, frustration back at full force.

“I have not yet prepared dessert,” Hannibal said, blotting his lips delicately with his napkin, “because I wasn’t sure what you wanted.”

“I think you know exactly what I want,” Will replied huskily. Hannibal’s eyes darkened immediately.

“Then I suppose the dishes can wait,” he purred. Will shoved out of his chair just as Hannibal pushed his away from the table, giving Will ample space to straddle the doctor. Will kissed him like a starving man, sucking at each lip in turn before nipping his way to the older man’s tongue. Hannibal hummed, and those perfect arms were wrapped around Will again. Will tangled his hands in Hannibal’s hair, tugging lightly to pull his head to a better angle. Hannibal groaned, the vibrations of which sent hot bolts of lightning to Will’s cock. He ground down, pressing his hardness to Hannibal’s, and there was that beautiful erection again.

Drunk on lust and white wine, Will broke from the kiss and panted into Hannibal’s ear. “I need—I, I need,” he begged.

Hannibal cupped his ass and pulled, and suddenly they were moving. Hannibal had picked him up. Jesus fuck that was hot. Will wrapped his legs around Hannibal’s waist and sucked bruises onto the doctor’s neck. Hannibal growled, and Will was slammed into a wall. Hannibal kissed him ferociously, grinding hard into the V of Will’s legs. “If you keep that up,” Hannibal gritted out, “we will not make it to the bedroom.”

That sounded fine to Will, but he knew that their first time should be more than a quick fuck on a wall. Even though that sounded really good right about now. He kept his mouth to himself while Hannibal carried him up the stairs (seriously, how strong was this guy?) and dropped him unceremoniously on the bed.

So this was Hannibal’s room, Will observed foggily. It was nice. He didn’t have time to think much more because Hannibal had yanked off his v-neck and the room lost all appeal compared to
the glory of Hannibal’s chest. Will sat up and, gripping Hannibal’s hips, sucked on the nearest skin he could reach, which happened to be a few inches north of Hannibal’s belly button. Hannibal had a belly button. Will slouched and licked into it, drawing a tortured gasp from the older man.

“Are you clean?” Hannibal asked abruptly.


Hannibal tugged Will's head back by the hair, bringing his face close to Will’s ear.

“I want to come inside you,” Hannibal hissed. “I want you to hold every last drop of me inside, to feel me even after we’re done. Are. You. Clean?”

“Yes!” Will moaned, a massive rush of arousal flooding his senses. Hearing Hannibal say such dirty things was the sexiest thing Will had ever experienced. “God, yes.”

Hannibal tugged Will’s shirt up and over his head, then pushed him flat to lay on top of him. Will hissed, the sensation of being chest-to-chest so hot, so soft, so perfect. Hannibal moved down, sliding over Will’s skin (sweet Jesus) as he made his way down Will’s torso, licking and nipping at random bits of flesh. He unbuttoned Will’s jeans and looped his thumbs into Will’s boxers, pulling both layers down and away in one fluid motion. He engulfed Will’s cock in his mouth, and Will nearly had a fit at the shock.

Hannibal bobbed his head a few times, then withdrew to lick precome out of Will’s slit.

“Agh, Hannibal….” Will swatted ineffectually at the doctor’s head. “Stop, I’m gonna, gonna...No! Don’t! I’m going to come!”

Hannibal pulled off of Will with an obscene pop. Will looked down and nearly cried in arousal. Hannibal was kneeling, lips red and shiny with saliva, over Will’s cock, which was similarly red and shiny. It was like art.

“And?” Hannibal asked, giving Will that devilish grin that haunted him only two nights ago. Hannibal wrapped his lips around Will and sucked, and then Will was coming, soaring on the currents of lust that had buffeted at his brain all day long.

When Will came down, Hannibal was still suckling at his head, and Will realized that Hannibal had swallowed his come. His cock twitched painfully.

“Well, now what?” Will asked, crestfallen even in his afterglow. He had hoped for so much more out of the night.

Hannibal chuckled. “What makes you think we are done here?” Will looked down and saw the hard line of Hannibal’s cock in his jeans. He had almost no time to contemplate its size (‘big’ was as far as he’d gotten) before Hannibal moved back up Will’s body, kissing him lazily.

Will could taste himself on Hannibal’s lips, and he gasped at how amazing the combination of come and saliva tasted. Hannibal did something with his hands, and then there were cool, slick fingers pressing into the crack of his ass.

“You can’t mean to,” Will gasped, “I can’t.”

“I think I’ll be the judge of that,” Hannibal mouthed hot, wet kisses onto Will’s neck. The fingers pushed and probed, and one slid into Will’s hole. It was a foreign feeling to Will, who had never had anything pushed in there before, but it didn’t necessarily feel bad. In fact, as Hannibal worked
one finger in and out slowly, Will decided that it didn’t feel bad at all; in fact, it felt pretty nice. Will wished he could get hard again—no doubt this would feel ten times better with a dose of need in his system—but he was content to let Hannibal finger him just like this.

The second finger went in smoothly, and it felt better than the first. Now, Hannibal could manipulate the fingers together to hit spots and stretch things. He did something involving his wrist, just a flick of some kind, and it shot through Will like a thunderbolt. Will’s cock throbbed, beginning to get interested again, but it was too soon. This budding erection was painful in a glancing, jarring sort of way. Will whimpered, unwilling to shy away from Hannibal’s touch, but too sensitive to take pleasure from the feeling.

Hannibal worked at him for what felt like hours in bursts of hard, fast finger-fucking followed by lulls of soft, sweet caresses. Will wondered how he had the self-control; he was itching with need by now, and he’d come already.

Will’s arousal started to climb steadily again, the fingers in his ass persuading his body to comply. He moaned, working himself back onto Hannibal’s fingers. Hannibal growled, and then the fingers were gone.

Hannibal flipped Will onto his front and pulled his knees up so that he was kneeling. Will hung his head between his elbows, the vulnerability of the position making him feel suddenly shy.

The blunt head of Hannibal’s cock nudged at his entrance without further ado, and Will gasped as the head pushed in, gliding firmly through the ring of muscle. Will felt stretched, distended around the width of Hannibal’s erection, but it didn’t quite hurt. Hannibal had prepared him very well.

Hannibal cupped his hands around Will’s hipbones, pulling the man back onto his cock. Will choked on his own spit; he could feel Hannibal’s hips pressed into the cheeks of his ass, and he felt so full he could hardly breathe. Then Hannibal was pulling out slowly, the friction maddening. When Hannibal slammed back in, Will lost control of his arms and fell, gasping, onto the bed.

Hannibal ran a soothing hand over Will’s back. He looped the hand under Will, to his stomach, and pulled. Will groaned and allowed the hand to pull him upright, so his back was pressed against Hannibal. The doctor started his thrusts again, deep and forceful, up into Will. The change in angle shifted Hannibal’s cock to rest on his prostate, and with that Will felt like he was turning to jelly from the inside out. The slow, velvet-sandpaper friction made Will curl his toes in delight. He leaned back, arching so he could rest his head on Hannibal’s shoulder. Hannibal’s hands roved over Will’s torso, tweaking his nipples and tracing lines of lean muscle. One hand wandered up to Will’s shoulder and clamped over it, using the extra leverage to pump into Will.

A round of sharp, quick jabs to Will’s prostate left him breathless, and the line of long, powerful thrusts that followed did nothing to help. Will was caught in a dizzy, lightheaded euphoria that he couldn’t—nor did he want to—shake off. Hannibal was driving him insane, and, for once, he loved every second of it.

“Han-hann-i-bal,” Will sobbed, the syllables punctuated by Hannibal’s thrusts, “I n-need—“

Hannibal pushed on Will’s stomach so Will could feel the cock inside him all the more powerfully. His other hand left Will’s shoulder and formed a fist around the younger man’s erection, pumping it in time with his hips. Will felt like the world was crashing around him, falling under the weight of his ecstasy, higher and higher, breaching the cloud layer, so close, so high, so near.

Hannibal suddenly bit down on his shoulder so hard that he drew blood, and Will felt something warm splash inside him. That feeling of Hannibal coming inside, painting his walls with white,
sticky come, sent Will crashing into his orgasm. Will cried out, hands clenching onto Hannibal’s forearms as his back bowed, and rode out the waves of orgasm—white, airy hot followed by sluggish, swirling black-red—as Hannibal continued to pump his come into Will’s ass.

Hannibal came down before Will did, and when Will regained his senses he felt Hannibal laving over the bite mark on his shoulder.

“You’re mine, you know,” Hannibal murmured, kissing the bite before pulling out of Will with a hiss.

Will felt a warm trickle run down his thigh. “Completely and totally,” he breathed.

The pair settled down to fall asleep. Hannibal offered to get a towel to clean them both, and Will reluctantly agreed. He liked the feeling of Hannibal inside him, on him, next to him, surrounding him, but if he’d learned anything over the past few days, it was that an ounce of prevention was worth a pound of cure. Hannibal stood and stretched, which gave Will a very nice view of his backside, before getting a towel from the bathroom and wetting it. He returned and nudged Will’s thighs apart, groaning when he saw the mess between Will’s legs.

“You have no idea how beautiful you are,” he murmured, mopping gently at Will. The younger man sighed, truly feeling it, feeling beautiful and wanted and loved, for the first time in his life.

As Hannibal drifted off, Will reveled in his happiness. For the first time in what felt like an age, he was truly, actually, honestly content. He had a soon-to-be-beautiful home, a job that actually made a difference in the world, and the affection of the most remarkable man Will had ever met. He knew he would struggle in the future—especially when his cases got rough and he dreamed in Technicolor terror—but he had someone to turn to, someone who cared and listened and absorbed. Hannibal would stabilize him when his world got rocky, and he would make the walls of Will’s mind shatter when things got too humdrum.

Hannibal thought that Will needed a nice house to come home to. He was wrong. Here, in Hannibal’s bed, sweaty and tired, Will had all the home he would ever need.

Chapter End Notes

Be sure to stay tuned for the epilogue!

Thanks for reading!
The Epilogue

Chapter Notes

This is it! The last official installment of Hannibal the Handyman. I'll save my gushing for the end of the chapter notes :'). Thanks to Trade_Jack and Kawamura for pointing out the belatedness of the consent in Chapter 4. I've fixed it now :) Many thanks to my beta, backwards_blackbird from Tumblr. She's an awesome girl and a great friend. And we're having a Hannibal marathon sleepover tonight. Without any further ado, here is the epilogue!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was done. After almost four months of working repairs into his free time and spending nights sleeping amongst paint fumes, Will had finally finished fixing his house.

The once forlorn-looking country house had blossomed under Will and Hannibal’s hands. They had had to re-shingle the roof (they brought in a commercial company for that particular repair), tear out and replace a lot of insulation, rewire the electric, and, basically, redo everything else. It had been a Herculean effort for the two men, a challenge fought in elbow grease and perseverance, but they’d won, and now Will had a home he could really enjoy.

Walking through the house felt like walking through a trophy room for Will, where every improvement was a shiny brass goblet of success. His living room, once filled with dilapidated couches and a scratch-post coffee table, now held a luxurious black leather sofa and matching loveseat. Will had originally protested buying such a decadent set of furniture, but Hannibal argued that dog hair would brush off it easily. Will agreed to buy it immediately.

Will had also bought a flat-screen TV. Hannibal had snorted and acted derisive at first, but Will insisted that having access to the outside world was important. A night of cuddling and watching Iron Chef had convinced the older man, and now one could often find him curled up on the sofa, making cutting jabs at celebrity chefs. Will could remember one such night in perfect detail…

Will and Hannibal had settled down after a horribly long day of bringing Will’s old furniture downstairs and moving the new furniture into place. Their muscles were sore and their tempers were short. Will had already snapped at Hannibal several times, and the usually stoic doctor had responded in kind. Now that they were done, however, all they wanted to do was forget about the stress of the day and relax in each other’s arms.

“Do we really need to watch the television?” Hannibal had sighed, looping an arm around Will’s shoulders in spite of himself.

“Oh hush,” Will said fondly. “You like the TV. Don’t try to deny it.”

Will turned to the Food Network and tucked his legs over Hannibal’s lap. A show, some high-stakes competition program, was just starting. As the introductory credits began to roll, Will systematically relaxed his muscles. Hannibal had been teaching him physiological ways to reduce stress, and Will was doing his best to follow his advice.
Going back to work had been rough. A new, particularly violent serial killer had been attacking adolescent boys. Jack Crawford’s team had been working on the case for a week with no real progress, but Jack had decided that Will’s vacation time was more important than the killer’s capture. Will couldn’t disagree more, and the frustration of knowing that he could have saved lives, but didn’t, caused all of the tension that had finally left Will’s system to pile back on again. Not even Hannibal had been able to reach him. Will felt it was his duty to catch the killer as quickly as possible, no matter what the consequences. He felt responsible for these deaths, these young boys that would never get to go to college or have futures, and each new body was a new brand of torture for the profiler. He had eventually caught the killer, a woman named Elise Jenkins that killed young boys because she wanted to exact revenge on her first love. It was the ligature marks that had finally helped Will: the boys had been tied up and raped with a large dildo before being murdered.

Elise’s first love had been gay, you see.

It was revolting and horrible and Will hadn’t handled it well at all. Hannibal couldn’t touch him for a week without Will running away to vomit, and he couldn’t touch him romantically for even longer. Beverly Katz, the only member of Jack’s team that actually gave a shit about the profiler, had been driving him home every night when Hannibal had late appointments. Will discovered he couldn’t drive after he ended up in a ditch because he saw a bleeding, molested boy standing in the middle of the road. She would stay with him and talk about anything and everything she could think of to keep Will’s mind off the case, and Hannibal often invited her to stay for dinner. Hannibal began teaching Will methods to push away the images and calm his mind down enough to function. It had taken a few weeks, but Will slowly reverted back to himself. Some nights he still woke up with the victims’ cries pouring from his throat, but Hannibal did his best to soothe Will, and the nightmares became steadily rarer.

Even though Will had dealt with more cases since Elise Jenkins, he still used Hannibal’s calming techniques when his world made him feel claustrophobic. They helped center his thoughts, even when his worries were inane, like that time Hannibal had sent him to the supermarket and he hadn’t even known how to pronounce some of the items on the list. He clenched and relaxed his muscle systems and, somehow, he was good again.

This time, though, he just did it to ease his aching limbs. Hannibal had done a lot of the work (and Will had made sure to make his appreciation for the help very well-known, in a very good way), but Will still felt stiff and uncomfortable.

“She should have used lemon zest,” Hannibal commented, breaking thorough Will’s thoughts.

“Hmm?” Will asked, confused.

“This woman.” Hannibal pointed to the screen. “She used lemon juice when she should have used lemon zest. It would produce an oil that would diffuse much more easily into the dish.”

“Okay,” Will agreed, not understanding much beyond ‘lemon’ and ‘dish.’ He curled closer to Hannibal, breathing in the sweet tang of sweat and expensive aftershave. He nuzzled closer, licking at Hannibal’s pulse point.

The doctor didn’t seem to notice. He was humph-ing at the television, muttering, “Wrong, all wrong,” under his breath. Will pushed even closer, nibbling on the skin of Hannibal’s neck. His frustration with the day was manifesting into arousal, and Will knew just what to do to seduce Hannibal into bed.
Only it wasn’t working. Hannibal was acting like he hadn’t even noticed Will’s attention, still mumbling about the show. Will redoubled his efforts, sliding one hand over Hannibal’s chest as he moved to suck at Hannibal’s collarbone.

“Honestly, Will, do you mind?” Hannibal had griped, batting Will’s hand away.

Will moved back, shocked. Hannibal instantly realized what he had said and tried to apologize, but Will stopped him.

Will bit his lip. Hannibal had just pushed him away from interrupting the TV. That was rude. That was… fucking hilarious. Will roared, Hannibal’s concerned-upset expression only making him laugh harder.

“You- you said you didn’t want a TV,” he gasped between chuckles. “You said it was stupid!” Will pulled away from Hannibal and bent over from laughing so hard. Really, though. Who would have ever thought that Hannibal Lecter, the man that went to operas to end world hunger and played the harpsichord for fun, would actually watch TV? And shitty cooking shows, no less?

“I never said it was ‘stupid,’” Hannibal said. “I said that it was a poor substitute for other forms of entertainment. I stand by that.”


He stopped suddenly. Had he just? He had. He had said the “L-word.” He wasn’t supposed to do that. He had no idea how Hannibal would react. No. Why had he gone and said that? Shit.


Will hadn’t heard him right, couldn’t have heard him right. Hannibal loved him? Really? Will had always known that he held a spot in Hannibal’s heart—he’d been told that rather explicitly many times—but love? Real, proper, I-would-kill-for-you love?

That night, Hannibal and Will had sex in Will’s house for the first time. No, that wasn’t right. They didn’t have sex; they made love.

That night changed them. Will was more protective of Hannibal, snapping at colleagues whenever they mocked his formalness, and Hannibal was more nurturing, often coming to crime scenes to help Will deal with the consequences of his gift. They balanced each other even better now, and everyone could see it.

Will’s house reflected this relationship. Some aspects were very “Will,” all nature-friendly and forest greens, while others were very “Hannibal,” full of old-world charm and sophistication. The kitchen had drastically changed, of course; it now mirrored Hannibal’s, featuring a Dutch oven and an upscale gas range. Will’s microwave had been unceremoniously thrown in the trash.

(Will snuck in back into his house while Hannibal was away. It was hidden in his office. He loved Hot Pockets too much.)

The dogs had newer, nicer beds, too, though Lucy was more often found curled up beside Hannibal than anywhere else. Hannibal didn’t mind, though he knew now to change out of his suits before coming over.

Will still hadn’t gotten over Hannibal in casual clothes. Somehow, Hannibal didn’t seem to mind.
Their garden had flourished, and many of Hannibal’s meals featured home-grown produce. They had plans to make it even bigger next year. For now, though, Will’s pumpkins were just ripening. Halloween would be coming soon and Will couldn’t wait to start carving jack’o’lanterns. Hannibal had reluctantly agreed to help, which made Will even more excited; with his surgical precision and his eye for aesthetics, Hannibal’s pumpkins would be awesome.

But the biggest difference, the greatest improvement, was in Will himself. He was happier, smarter, saner. He was catching criminals more quickly than ever, now that he had a support system to come home to. He felt loved, wanted, normal, and it showed. He was one of the most well-liked teachers in Quantico, his easy humor and sharp insight making him a favorite for many students.

Alana had been so pleased to see his change in demeanor that she’d kissed him. He’d pushed her away, telling her about his relationship with Hannibal, and that had made her even happier. She was now a close friend of the couple’s, and they had had dinner at Hannibal’s house once a week ever since.

It felt surreal, leading such an abnormal-yet-idyllic life. Every day, Will saw the worst of humanity. Every night, he was reminded of the best of it. And it was all Hannibal, his quiet power and continual strength. Hannibal had given so much, taken so little, and cared so deeply that Will was almost forced to heal so that he could deserve such love.

Will didn’t know what the future would bring. He could be taken down by a serial killer, Hannibal could be targeted as bait—anything could happen. It didn’t matter. Will was finally happy, finally healthy. That was what mattered. He and Hannibal, they were what mattered. And you know what?

This home, this life? This was their design.

Chapter End Notes

What a perfect end to such an amazing journey. And it really has been a journey, for Hannibal and Will, for you guys, and for me. I was push-mowing just last week and I said to myself, "Wouldn't it be just hilarious to see Hannibal mowing the lawn in his little suit and tie?" And this was born. It's absolutely amazing to me.

Thank you to everyone that subscribed, bookmarked, and kudos-ed this story, and WOW thank you to the people that subscribed to me! I've been in a really deep funk lately (college tends to do that to you), and the overwhelming support and love I've gotten on my stories has brought me out of it. Thank you. Thank you all.

Okay, sappiness over. Just so you know, I've already been asked to do a follow-up one-shot where Hannibal takes Will shopping for clothes ("Now that you are a part of my life, William, you must have the tools necessary to navigate through it. This, of course, includes a tuxedo."), so be sure to keep an eye out for that! I'm also working on a very big AU story that's a GoT/Hannibal mashup, so if you like kings and knights and the like, that'll be out eventually, too.

Thanks for reading!
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