Sick or Sane

by sick_boy

Summary

Will has been convicted of five counts of murder and resides in the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. When Will becomes suddenly sick, will they determine the cause and treat it, or will it be too late?
Chapter 1

His first sensation was of hard rubber cooling his cheek where vomit had not glued his head to the floor and crusted in his hair. He breathed in tiny gasps through parted, cracked lips to avoid his olfactory sense and distract himself from the bitter aftertaste of his saliva, limbs askew, too heavy to move. He tried opening his eyes but discovered they were already slitted. A purple blur came into focus and he felt it open his mouth and fish out the leftover chunks he couldn't bring himself to spit. His head was tilted, and something rough and white wiped away most of the muck on the left side of his face, followed by something wet and with a pungent, thin smell in contrast to the heavy atmospheric odour that pervaded the room. Antiseptic, the word zoomed into his head. The purple flickered into his vision for another second, before his body was forced backwards so he wasn't inhaling the stench of stomach acid. Away from one puddle, he soon realized there was another between his legs, darkening the blue of his jumpsuit, and a ping of emotion itched his brain. His eyes darted to the floodlight in his room and the white knifed through to the back of his head; he squinted his eyes shut and groaned, which came out as more of a croak from his burning throat.

Then, as if a suction released pressure on his ears, sound flooded into where it was previously mute. "-ster Graham, can you hear me? Mister Graham." He had felt those words wash over him before, had even heard the morphemes strung together in the same order, but couldn't connect the phonetics to their semantics. A face came into view as his head was tilted once again, but he only glimpsed at the man for a second before the light overtook his eyes and he defensively bathed them in darkness until the kaleidoscopic shapes dissolved behind his eyelids. He head a clink as he tried to lift his leaden hands- handcuffs, he thought. Steadily, his vocabulary was coming back to him.

The pudgy man before him gazed into his eyes, clearly discerning something. "No, he's still looking right through me," determined Barney, Will shouted in his head. He just needed to get his lips working; they felt all out of order, as though he was given novocaine not long ago. First, he breathed short gusts of air, then refashioned his lips together- it took a couple tries.

"I think he's going into it again," Barney concerned himself with Will's repetitive mouth motion.

Then, simultaneously, he put his lips together and pushed the air out. "B-Bar... n-" he mouthed, the effort exhausting him. He found the man's eyes, managed to move his right hand towards him.

"Hey," Barney breathed, relief evident as he smiled at Will. "You know my name?"

Appreciation flooded into his chest like the warmth of whiskey. He nodded, but winced at his bruised head moving across the floor. Barely could he register the pain when a curious sensation struck him. His consciousness was receding like an unplugged bath, lucidity vortexed into a black hole.

Will's tongue was thick in his mouth, and he noted a coppery taste to his saliva. "I think... um sick uhgen." He shut his eyes from the dizzying fluid sensation in his core, like he was moving while leaving his body behind. He wondered briefly if his head was cracked open, bleeding himself dry onto the floor. His mouth wasn't cooperating anymore to ask Barney if he could see his cerebellum.

For what the tech lacked in wits, he made up with compassion; he was only mental health technician worth trusting in the whole hospital. Not only that, he knew Will didn't belong here, knew at the very least that he wasn't like the other serial killers. As conclusive as he heard the evidence was, Barney
had all the evidence he needed as he knelt helplessly before the sick man. He wiped Will's sweaty curls away and checked his temperature with the back of his hand. Definitely elevated. As Will's eyes began to glaze over, he chided, "Will, stay with me, you can't go to sleep yet, I need to ask y-Will? ...Oh shit-

Will's eyes rolled back into his head as it snapped back, opening his mouth to let loose a choked cry, as though he were still conscious and terrified of his body's betrayal. Hands curled into fists and shook violently like he was vehemently praying, the guttural sounds ejecting from his throat mystic, agonized words of another tongue. His torso convulsed back and forth, legs jerking desultorily.

Looking to his wrist, Barney remembered he wasn't allowed to wear his watch on the maximum security unit. He started counting the seconds of Will's second seizure. By eighteen, the convulsions minimized, and soon after, his limbs slumped, splayed out wilder than before.

"Twenty-six seconds!" He called out to no one in particular- it's not like anyone else would give a damn about following procedure, much less proactively monitoring an inmate's stability past the point of their own safety. Restarting his count, Barney put two fingers to the patient's carotid artery. *Th-thuh, th-huh...* His pulse beat like hummingbird wings, quick and feathery. Will's hair was plastered to his forehead, drenched in sweat, his chest and pants still damp.

Various foul odors hung heavily in the humid, stale air of the dank hospital basement.

"Is anyone gonna get a fuckin' mop or y'all just gonna stand there?" Barney swore, eyeing the stagnant crowd around him. Three other techs shifted their weight behind him, their arms crossed, while two police officers stood outside the cell, a smaller orderly behind them, leaning on the gurney. "And someone needs to alert Doctor Chilton to this situation, we're gonna need to transport him to Union Memorial, vitals aren't looking good. Call them and make sure a bed's open on the secure ward."

Two pairs of standard-issue shoes swiftly pattered down the hall as he heard a weak groan from the morbidly pale man he kneeled before. But that groan turned into another, drawn out and tortured, until Barney realized that Will Graham was sobbing with what little strength he had left, semi-conscious and spluttering for breath. Was it out of physical or emotional pain? He wagered both. The trembling of his hands rattled the short chain of the handcuffs that been refashioned on him after his last seizure.

"Bring in the gurney," the tech in the corner ordered. He nodded to Roberto, "Get his legs."

Will squirmed against the oxygen mask Barney pressed to his face; he couldn't secure the band around his head if he wouldn't cooperate.

"Will, hold still. It's not going to hurt you," he reasoned. Moments passed and Will ceased to struggle, more out of the fact that he was rapidly losing consciousness.

Barney felt it before it happened- it was one of those unexplainable intuitive moments. The screams of Rothstein, the Hasidic child rapist, penetrated the otherwise still scene. Sometimes Will listened to the rabbi that visited him every morning, just to break up the day and give him something to think about. A few times he had caught himself repeating phrases of their prayers from when he was first incarcerated. From their conversations and religion class from the Academy, he gathered it was leading up to the High Holy Days. Will knew he was innocent, but the suffocating blanket of punishing guilt drove him to murmuring these phrases in hopes to appease whatever force he offended, whatever menacing god that allowed this to happen.

It wasn't anything new- every day at exactly 4:30pm, Rothstein would scream five times, then twice at 10:06pm, which Barney admitted was impressive because no one on the maximum security ward
was allowed a clock. On paper, they were safety risks- God knows how many times Barney had seen batteries drained of their acid like mini liquor bottles. Any spare glass or plastic would undoubtedly serve as sharp objects for self mutilation or, more often, stowed away safe for the right begrudged guard to come along. But the real reason, Barney knew, was to break the patient's will. If they had nothing to ground themselves with, if they could not ensure time was passing by through an external, consistent change, they were more likely to give in to nervous habits, crack their exoskeleton and expose the neuroses for Chilton like an exquisite dish to be savoured at whim. After all, the doctor had the rest of their lives. But maybe not all of Will's...

Barney had read Will's file, knew he had suffered one seizure prior to his first hospital admission for a dangerously high fever, the precursor to his encephalitis diagnosis, but this? Two seizures out of nowhere? How many more were to come, and more importantly, what was causing them? The onset of epilepsy in adulthood was almost non-existent; it must be environmental. He knew Chilton would probably say he's faking. All the same, Barney knew the psychiatrist would tack on psychogenic non-epileptic seizures to his laundry list of diagnoses unless an EEG revealed excessive neuronal firings. But the sweating, fever, tremors... Will's hospital stay, medical hospital that is, must have been clipped short. They probably gave the bed to someone who wasn't convicted of five murders. Barney may not have willingly chosen this career of handling humanity's sickest (turns out that's what flunking out of college with a football scholarship and a couple psych courses will land you,) but he'd like to think that he was aiding the flawed healthcare system of this country, starting with basic human decency.

But those alone wouldn't fix anyone in the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, least of all Will Graham, who was shuddering under the chest restraint of the gurney as if he were stripped naked in a relentless Maryland blizzard. They flew down the hallway, inhibited only by the locked doors. Once they reached the ambulance dock, Barney and the techs transferred Will to another gurney, though they couldn't safely use five-point restraints with a seizure risk. Loading him into the ambulance, they slammed the doors, waited until they were past the gates of the hospital so as not to disturb the other patients, and blared the siren as they sped down the road.

Chapter End Notes

I really don't know where this is going, and I've had this chapter for a while. Plus i'm in college and have a beyond-full schedule. Don't expect an update for a while (as much as I would like one too, haha)

In the meantime, please comment and criticize! It's much appreciated!
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

There was an error I fixed in the first chapter- Will overheard the rabbi's prayers when he was first imprisoned, around the beginning of September, and it is now December.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The vibration of the squeaky gurney wheels jostled his recumbent body, the hum creating a sequence of neon green ellipses and hyperbola that appeared from the centre of his vision on the black backdrop of his eyelids and expanded beyond his gaze, resounding through his head. In vain, he tried to concentrate on someone other than his loss of bodily control and his numbing bare feet as the biting winter air grew nearer. It wouldn't be long before he was under again, but he held on, keeping count of the locked doors the procession of police and techs ghosted through. He counted six before the gurney was positioned into an elevator. His stomach threatened release of projectile proportions as the room lilted from its previous gentle ascension. They were on the ground floor- Will could feel it. The fresh air renewed his senses, and he waited until a sudden light- natural light- graced his eyes. The snowscape to his left mesmerized him, a palate of the most ethereal white on Earth to the bleary, distraught grey sky only interrupted by the distant forest of evergreens, like the monochromatic paintings he'd seen at the NOMA on a grade school class trip. It was ironic, that the snow blanketing the hospital grounds was so pure and unperturbed, another façade disguising the outlandish, disturbed thoughts of those who would never tread on such precipitation again. After his sentencing, Will dreamed of a life after imprisonment. No, he could never see himself released from this condemnation, but he could relinquish himself from this humdrum agony he faced in a padded basement cell...

It could be very beautiful, he imagined; he double exposed stock images of his old place in Wolf Trap on sunny winter days, particularly drawing from that one near-perfect morning with Alana when they tramped the grounds in search for a wounded animal, albeit a hallucination. The sun glimmered off the snow, intermittent with patches of yellowed grass like they were walking on altocumulus clouds (Will had certainly felt as weightless then.) And... and there was more. There was his dad smiling at him in the distance like when he was twelve and reeled in a three pound bass from St. John's Bayou. And there was something standing behind him- a woman no doubt, but... could it be? She had chocolate-brown hair just like Alana, cut short as older woman do, but beyond that, he couldn't decipher. Will had only seen the odd Polaroid of his mother, but she hadn't lived to the age her stature wore. She looked good and... motherly. He didn't know exactly what that was supposed to look or feel like, but a curious warmth in his chest he'd never quite felt before told him that yes, this was his mother.

He looked above him, the sky now the grass and snow of that one picturesque morning, to where he must ascend. Here, he was being pushed and pulled by ocean waves at war with each other. Each was a mirthless black and equally as relentless, their force accusations expelling the air from his ribcage- he was struggling just to keep his head above water, muscles contracting, opposing its vengeful destruction. But why not let the waves engulf him? Why, he questioned himself, when his death meant his entrance to that higher place, full of light and sharp, clear air? Peace whispered in his heart at the mere thought; just a glimpse of this cleansing serenity and he let go. Immediately, he was overwhelmed by an upsurge to his far left, what he knew to be the last sense of threat to ever
intrude upon his placidity.

Like a ballet danseur, water bathed him of his awkward movement- as the bubbles of his last breath floated over his head, he looked downward, the green-tinged water luminescent from an immeasurable globe of light at the bottom of the ocean. Then, a pastel pink lace ribbon appeared near his face, and he reached for it. Was this his entrance to Heaven? It surprised him with its hard texture, but he held on as it tugged him downward, which was beginning to feel more like upward, toward the light. Oh, its presence was too glorious for his mortal body to bear, the globe's warmth parched his skin despite the water surrounding him. Any second his skin would peel off like dry paint, and the light inside of him, the dim, flickering unstable light, would meld into the Sun or God or who or whatever this light was- it was Perfection, and he would be clean, if only he could join this light, he just had to hold on to the ribbon, this... light...

He knew he was no longer underwater, but he was wet all over, and the light was oppressive and harsh and unnatural and the ribbon... the ribbon wasn't a ribbon, but a plastic tube. One, ahhhh, Will gasped, that was halfway out of his arm, the needle at its end fishing around inside of him, a bruise forming already. Then, just as before, his ears popped (where had the ocean gone?) Several men were shouting, and twice as many hands restrained his limbs.

"-old you we can't!" exclaimed a voice to his left. "His vitals are all over the place, we don't know what the hell's wrong, he could've OD'd, it could stop his heart."

"We don't have another choice, he's violently hallucinating, either we sedate him or restrain-"

"He just got done having his third seizure in two hours! We're ten minutes out, just wai-"

"There's no time for that. You can hold his hand all you want but he's not gonna-"

Will, out of his mind with his most recent transcendence to reality and the sobering pain of his arm, could hold his tongue no longer. "Ged id out... ged it out! 'Hurts!"

The unyielding man on the his right held his arm down and added, "Well at least he's starting to make some fuckin' sense."

"Alright Will," someone- Barney, there was no one else he knew who so well suited his name- spoke loudly, his face following Will's to get his eye contact. "Alright, but we need you to keep your arm still," he said like he was negotiating a hostage situation.

"M'trying," he cried, his world receding proportionally to the growing awareness of his profound aches and pains, the acidity of his stomach, the vice grips of the techs' fat fingers on his trembling limbs. Barney quickly and efficiently slid the needle out, applying a white pad as a trickle of red dribbled down his forearm.

"Will... Will, I need to you look at me," Barney guided him, closing the distance between them until their noses were inches apart. Will's eyes goggled around the ambulance; he was out of his mind with pain and he just wanted it to stop. "I need to know if you took more medication than usual today. Did you save it up and take it all at once?"

Will furrowed his eyes further, trying to still himself so Barney's outline would be less fuzzy. "No... no, I-I didn'..."

"He wouldn't tell you even if he did, you forget who we're dealing with?" Paul mocked.

Before Barney could respond, the driver announced their arrival. The tech relayed this to Will, whose sweat dripped down his face. "We're at the hospital, Will. We're going to get you inside and
run some tests to figure out what's wrong, and you'll start feeling better in no time."

The ambulance backed into the dock and Roberto and Paul opened the doors, lifting the stretcher out as Barney caught the other end and lowered it to the ground.

Two doors opened automatically. Artificial light and many voices assaulted his senses; he felt his conscious recede in defense.

"This is the patient from the Baltimore State Hospital, he's had three seizures in the last two hours, in and out of consciousness, vitals shaky, temperature of 104.9, we couldn't establish an IV because he was having a violent hallucination. He was treated for encephalitis four months ago and was cleared of the infection. His doctor is faxing his file over straight away, but I know the list of medications he's on."

He heard a new voice to his side, a self-assured female. "Okay, we'll need a blood sample, urinalysis, we'll get him on anti-convulsants and anti-pyretics, fluids... CT..."

Will slipped into heavy, dreamless unconsciousness.

Chapter End Notes

Woohoo, didn't expect the chapter to be done so quickly. Yay hypomania!

As always, i appreciate any comments or criticisms you have. Maybe you can tell me if the hallucination scene worked for you or not, as i don't write more abstract things like that often.
When he woke, he noticed several things at once: he was dry and covered in a papery gown, there was an oximeter on his finger, a needle in the back of his hand above a throbbing bruise, and he was in a large white tube whirring and beeping. Surely, it would be too loud if not for the plugs in his ears. Momentarily, he wondered what "experimental therapy" Chilton was planning this time, but the exhausted ache throughout his whole body claimed the majority of his attention. His muscles were stuck in a state of contraction, from his neck down to his calves. He felt like he was on a metal slab down in the Quantico morgue, like his body had long gone into rigor mortis and he was meant to suffer maintaining consciousness, unable to communicate with the world. Where were the guards? Why wasn't he in handcuffs? Could he even speak? Would the guards even hear him? Am I alive?

"Easy, Mr. Graham, it's okay. I need you to stay still," a woman's voice on an intercom reassured him. Was he moving? Her voice was warm and sweet like a jar of honey in the sun- he had forgotten what kindness sounded like. She must not know he's a convicted serial killer. So he wasn't in the Baltimore State Hospital... Vague bits and pieces of the day rose to the surface of his mind, but they remained indecipherable and without a time stamp, like jigsaw pieces floating on pool waves. His mouth was a desert, his head a wad of cotton.

The whirring sounds stopped, and then the intercom buzzed again, "Do you know where you are?"

He swallowed, then drawled, "Hospital."

"That's right," she affirmed, a smile evident in her husky voice, bathing him in warmth. A hint of Southern lilt metered her words, and Will found himself drawn into the cadence. "We're in Union Memorial Hospital. You're having a CT scan. My name's Anita, I'm a nurse here; do you know your name?"

"Will-" he coughed dryly. "Will Graham."

"That's right." Her voice took on a softer tone. "Does the machine frighten you?"

A sheen of sweat now coated him, though he realized he was shivering. "Y-yes," he admitted. The cold permeated his skin and raised goosebumps on his pale flesh.

"Okay, it's going to take about five minutes for the test to be complete, and I need you to hold still throughout. Can you do that?"

She was asking, it wasn't a command with severe consequences threatening what little privilege he had left.

"Yes-s, I'm j-just cold," he said. His tremors must have disrupted the test.

"I can put on music if you want-"

He was almost pleading. "No, no, just... just keep talking to me." Hearing a voice free of judgement, pity, or resignation was such a foreign concept to him nowadays- that role once belonged to his dogs, but Will instantly shut the thought of them out of his mind. He couldn't go there anymore.

"What do you want to hear about?" She asked. He heard faint clicks of buttons over the intercom,
then the machine came to life again.

"Anything."

"Okay, I'm gonna restart the test now, I need you to keep still from the neck upward. It won't take long. I'm going to tell you..." she drew out the word in thought, "the story of how I met my husband." There was that smile again...

Will's attention was suddenly directed to the machine, which began whirring like a laundry washer around him, scrambling the contents inside. He feared that the cylinder would shrink as the test went on, slowly encasing him in an antiseptic tomb.

He must have gasped, because Anita came over the speaker again, "It's alright, Mr. Graham. Try to close your eyes and concentrate on the sound of my voice.

Now, it started the summer of my junior year in a little old town in Mississippi..."

She guided him through a series of images, abashedly chuckling or joking along the way. At times, she paused in reverie, but she dutifully remembered her anxious patient and continued the story in her serene tone. Will thought she must have once considered being a pre-school teacher, with what earnest enjoyment she received from telling a story. Or was it the satisfaction of calming a patient? Empathy remained beyond the cloudy veil in his mind, and he was momentarily grateful.

The nurse told him of a farmer's boy from Kansas, pre-med like her, in ROTC, a field hockey player. They bonded in the research lab, both working late hours- microscopes make weary eyes. When he joined Doctors Without Borders years later, she thought it would be the end of their marriage, but the occasional distance only makes their love stronger. Heath was currently in his fourth out of six months in Namibia, and how she couldn't wait to "give him some sugar" when they were reunited once again.

The commotion ceased and Will was slid out into the open space. He saw two toned officers next to the door, unfolding their arms. Shoulders back, chins lifted, faces steeled, all while keeping Will in their periphery. Each attendant adopted the same stance in Baltimore; it spoke of inhuman, machine-like confidence, totalitarian authority. It made Will's stomach curdle every time.

Lucky for the guards, Will found that he had much trouble lifting his head, let alone maneuvering the rigid muscles of his body. *What was wrong with him?* It wasn't like this last time. Couldn't be meningitis, his throat was only acid-washed from vomit, not swollen. Maybe an infection from one of the numerous hastily-administered injections he's received over the past four months. He was too tired to think anymore. Anita approached him, eyeing the guards just enough to acknowledge their presence and no more. So she knew why he had guards studying his every move?

Will felt the need to explain, to vindicate himself, to somehow differentiate himself from the typical patient on the secure unit. "I, uhh..." he started sheepishly.

But she seemed to know it was coming. The line easily rolled off her tongue, but out of usage, not insincerity. "You don't have to explain anything to me. I'm here to do my duty to you, and nothing in your past changes that."

He attempted a smile, which felt like a twitch, and looked back down his horizontal profile, glad to see something other than a navy jumpsuit.

"While you're there, let me get a temperature reading." She walked past his IV stand to a cart in the corner, returning with a hand-held thermometer, and swiped the sphere across his sweaty forehead.
"103.6," she read as if committing it to memory. "The anti-pyretic may take a little more time to have a full effect. Your bloodwork should be back in a few hours, we'll know more then."

She nodded her head back, "Officer?"

Will tensed, ready to be manhandled, when he saw a wheelchair being pushed forward.

"Can you stand?"

"No, I can't move that well," he admitted.

"Because of pain?" She followed up.

"No, its... My muscles are really stiff."

"Okay... I'll need to inform your doctor of this, but in the meantime, I'm going to ask the officers here to assist me in getting you into the wheelchair." He was thankful for the warning as one officer lifted at his knees, the other under his arms. Anita transferred the IV bag to the pole on the wheelchair as he bent forward to ease his arms into right angles, leaning on the armrests. An officer held the door open as she maneuvered him through, followed closely by the guards.

"I'm taking you to your room now. You vomited during your first seizure, so there is little to nothing in your stomach, and judging by your figure, there wasn't much in there in the first place," she teased, pushing him gently as they strolled down the hall. Uniformed police officers congested the space like ants on a picnic table. Will kept his eyes on the off-white linoleum.

The movement was upsetting his balance, aggravating the vertigo. That was one symptom he could rule out; ever since he came out of his induced coma to treat his encephalitis, he had experienced bouts of dizziness. Sometimes he went to reach for an object far away, only to discover his hand had passed it. Barney asked him why he sometimes only ate food on the right side of the plate. He knew the test answer patterns when the doctors routinely tested for brain damage and spun the tray around to make sure he saw everything he wanted. It wasn't blindness; he could see okay, even without his glasses (safety risk, of course. Contacts were not an option.) He knew it wasn't good, but he kept it to himself; the last thing he wanted was to give Chilton a reason to poke around his head some more.

Chapter End Notes

Comments/criticism always appreciated!
Chapter 4

Anita wheeled him into the panultimate room on the left. The window showed that the sun had already set, a navy winter sky darkening by the minute. Will was parked next to a bed with blue foam padding the rails and a series of branched out wires resting on top of the overused, overwhite pillow.

"How's the nausea?" She asked, back in nurse mode.

"Medium."

"Do you think you can eat?"

"I don't know," he answered honestly. He didn't want to try, but he guessed it was better to have something in his stomach to throw up instead of impatient acids bubbling angrily.

"Okay, I have a turkey sandwich and ginger ale. That sound okay?"

Again with the questions. Will appreciated having choice back into his life, but he wished for now that she were more like Paul, carrying out orders from higher authority. How easy it was to melt into the submissive role of prisoner, to shut off his brain indefinitely.

He barely nodded, and Anita excused herself out of the room. The guards remained, one next to the door and the other leaning against the wall under the blank TV. Will's head drooped, but sleep did not overcome him. Two minutes later, he heard footsteps- Barney's footsteps; the sound of tech shoes scuffing linoleum is very distinct, and Will had had enough time to engrain each detail of Baltimore firmly into his mind.

Barney showed his badge to the guards and entered the room, a sandwich, a styrofoam bowl, and a soda can in his hand. Even recognizing one of his two sources of comfort throughout this ordeal, Will kept his eyes on the floor, curls just starting to stick to his forehead again.

"Well you look awful," Barney joked. Some days, Barney's attempts at humour were all that kept him from tugging at his hair and screaming. Today was not one of those days.

"'Look how I feel," Will whispered, his throat parched. "Seriously, though," he added, his tone a little lower. "You're really pale. I've got your food, you should eat." He set the food down on the rectangular table and positioned it toward him. "The nurse went to talk to your doctors; she'll be back soon."

Barney sat on the bed and huffed. "I have to take the can away, but there's a straw and cup here. I'd start with the soda, you sound like a frog."

Will leaned forward until his mouth met the straw and sucked in the syrupy liquid. This was another aspect of the outside world he wasn't aware he was missing. The bubbles ate at his throat, but the sugar put weight into his stomach, the ginger settling the foundation for the food to come. Situating himself to eat, however, was significantly harder. Lifting the deadweight arms was difficult enough, then was the task of positioning them like a mannequin, foreign limbs over which he had little control. Barney, who had been studying him not so stealthily out of the corner of his eye, inched the table closer and lifted the sandwich to Will's tremoring hands.

"What's the matter with your arms?" He asked daftly.
"Stiff."

"Does your nurse know about it?"

Will nodded, lowering his head to take a bite. The white bread was dry and stuck to the roof of his mouth, the turkey a mealy afterthought. He tried not to think about taste, but the mechanical act of chewing. Chew, swallow, wait, sip, wait. Chew, swallow, wait...

"Where were you?" Will inquired, wanting to take his mind off the tedious task of eating.

"Went to grab my own dinner. You were asleep anyway, I thought the officers could handle you," he said with a wink. "That nurse is cute, huh?"

"Married..."

Barney chuckled, "So you were into her too?"

The corners of Will's mouth twitched; Barney was trying so hard to act like this was all commonplace, like there weren't two guards listening to their conversation, like he didn't have to confiscate a soda can because it could be used as a weapon. Bless his heart, Will thought, an old saying from his past. The least he could do is try and reciprocate.

"What's that?" Will nodded to the bowl on the corner of the table.

"Oh that," Barney palmed the lid off, as a salty, humid odour permeated the cold, clinical air, "is chicken soup. Thought you might like-"

The rest of the tech's sentence was lost to the violent gagging that suddenly overcame the agonized patient.

*You made me chicken soup?*

"Or not," Barney muttered. He grabbed the bucket in the corner of the room reserved for these instances and shoved it into Will's lap, pressing the nurse call button on the bed rail. He re-lidded the offending food and dropped it in the trash. Despite his instincts, Barney knew better than to touch Will in this state. Someone had taken advantage of him when he was like this, the tech thought. He often speculated about the patient's lives from the psychoanalytical point of view, but no one ever asked him for his poorly-educated opinion.

By the time the nurse entered the room, however, Will's gag reflex had worn out and he was shivering weakly in his wheelchair. The bucket thankfully remained empty, though the majority of the sandwich lay untouched on the plastic wrap. Barney informed Anita of the patient's latest bout of nausea, making a corny joke about hospital food along the way.

"How are you feeling now, Mr. Graham? Any better?"

"A little," he replied, his hand still nearly covering his mouth.

She nodded. "While I'm here, we need a urine sample. Do you think you can give that to me now?"

He affirmed that he could. Barney, taking his cue, oriented the table back above the bed and guided Will into the adjacent bathroom. With the click of the door, Barney knelt in front of Will.

He was whispering. "Will, this is very important. I know I asked you earlier but you're more lucid now. I've seen you over the last few months, how depressed you are."
"No," Will cut in, mouthing insistently. Even in his groggy state, it was an obvious question.

"-considering what happened yesterday, and if you did something, you're not going to get in trouble, I'll just-"

"No."

"There are people that care about you-"

Will was frustrated now. If he had the energy, he'd have raised his voice. "I didn't! I don't know what's wrong."

With a long gaze, Barney resigned his therapeutic tone. "Okay," he stood. "Lets get the sample."

A moment passed. "I can't get off the chair," Will admitted.

"That's okay, just uhh..." the tech surveyed the room. "Ah, use this."

He placed in his hand a clear plastic container with a circular opening and a handle on top. A vague sense of humility burned through Will's brain, but his admittance to Baltimore obliterated any visible sense of the word. He had his boxers tugged down for many intramuscular injections, he had been strip-searched on arrival, intruded upon while showering. This was nothing in comparison.

Barney turned around, walking to the corner of the room, surely violating policy. It took Will a minute, but he finally relaxed and collected the urine in the container. It was dark yellow from his previous dehydration.

Turning around, the tech capped the sample and wheeled Will back out, handing the container to Anita. "All yours!"

"Thanks... I'll be right back." Again she was gone.

When she returned, she was carrying three capped syringes. Will immediately went wide-eyed and shrunk in on himself, his breathing increasing so rapidly the oximeter beeped in warning.

Looking up, she realized the source of his anxiety. "Oh, honey," she apologized. "I'm just putting these in your catheter. Doctor..." she looked at Barney.

It took him a second to realize she was talking about him. "Oh, Barney's just fine. I'm a mental health tech."

Will looked up to gauge her reaction, but she appeared non-judgemental. At any rate, anyone who knew what meds he was on already knew what kind of crazy he was, or at least what kind of crazy everyone thought him to be.

"Barney told me your list of medications and it seems you missed your afternoon meds. With your nausea, we can't risk you vomiting pills; you may be feeling worse now because your body is withdrawing from the medication. I'm also giving you a muscle relaxant to ease the rigidity."

There was a spark, an instance where he thought to protest so much medication, but resignation desecrated it like a sweeping flood would a man. He nodded; there was no fight left in him.

"You have about an hour until the EEG's free. How about you rest your eyes for a little while?"

"O-okay," he agreed. Another test, another "inconclusive" result (which may or may not be the truth.) When would this cycle end?
Barney enlisted an officer to help him place Will on the bed, drawing a cooling blanket over him, save for his arms. Anita uncapped each syringe and, taking his hand in hers, pushed them into the catheter. Will savoured the gentle contact, committed her smooth, dark, warm hand to memory in contrast to his, clammy and paper-white. Whether by association or the faster method of delivery, Will instantly felt the tug of medicated blankness. His head drooped and he was he was falling... far away from himself...
Chills pinpricked his skin; he had soaked through another hospital gown. His stomach was a rolling sea, and this time he had no anchor in sight. Many times in his life had he embraced the possibility of death. When he was stabbed and left for dead in an alley propped up against a dumpster next to a pool of pipe run-off, rain tapping against his red-brown stained jacket running rusty water down his back. It had taken him fifteen minutes to single-handedly drag himself near the street, another four for anyone to see him.

Waking up from another collage of grotesque imagery and murderous projections, Will found his limbs had a mind of their own. He was surprised to find he could move them a bit better. But everything else had been cranked to eleven. Hands once again restrained him as his arms and legs struggled weakly. The terror still burned through his chest, though he could see he was in a hospital room, not an antler room. There were no holes in his torso from where he had been mounted on a stag head, and his lungs were still in his body, though they seemed to be malfunctioning. His vision sluggishly followed the movements of his eyes- everything was a blur of color and hands and voices telling him... telling him...


Something cold rolled across his forehead. “Fever’s up again,” someone commented. “104.6.”

"I've never seen him this out of it. I think he's getting worse," said the white, chubby man to his left. Barry. No- Barney?

"Will," he said, catching his nystagmatic eyes before they closed again.

No, *that* wasn't it...

He couldn't keep his eyes open; the world was too painful to see. "Somethings wrong," he slurred. Water jostled around in his head, spilling, spilling. He covered his eyes with the hand Barney released.

"Heart rate's still up, arrhythmic," another voice sailed over his head.

"What is it, Will?"

Will shook his head in response.

A voice from his right cut in. "His eyes were hurting him right before he had his second seizure."

"Is it the light, Will?" The woman offered, and he nodded his head slowly so as not to dump the water dripping from his skull down his back.

"That's a common seizure aura. EEG's free, we should get him down quick."

"I's what?" Will struggled to hold on to reality. Reality wasn't making sense. Reality wasn't staying *still*, and it wasn't just the arms moving under him, hoisting him up over the padded bars of his bed, but the world around him. It was buzzing with energy, and he was starting to feel separate, an
impartial viewer to everything around him. Then he was in a chair, the IV out of his hand, and moving. He closed his eyes and breathed heavily, his hands on his head to ensure it wasn't disintegrating. Sharp right, and straight down, down, down, until they came at a halt.

"Deep breaths for me, Will," said the voice behind him, but he couldn't. He was hyperventilating, his palm holding his forehead trying to block out the blinding-

The next thing he knew he was descending in the elevator, Barney's face in his. "-n you hear me?"

He sniffed, blinked a few times. "What?"

"You weren't responding to us," Barney said, brow furrowed.

"You're having absence seizures, Will. They can be brought on by hyperventilation, breathe slow for me," the nurse explained, her hand soothingly on his shoulder. What was her name?

The elevator dinged and the vertigo continued right where it left off. Will tried to compromise between gasping through the white-hot pain in his head and the breathing exercises Barney was leading him through. Panic was an earthquake in his chest, tectonic plates shifting to reveal a gaping hole where his heart should be. Each turn they took was another wave of nausea sloshing against his abdomen, bile rising in his throat.

The wheelchair pushed through an doorway, and the noise died down. Will kept his head parallel to the ground, desperate to avoid the light. He didn't know whether to clutch his head or his chest, both were heightening in pain by the second.

He felt a strong, bulky arm under his knees, another on his back, and he was lifted upward. The sour smell of Barney's sweat gave him away, but it disappeared after he was placed onto another bed.

People buzzed around him, fiddling with medical paraphernalia. "Get me some more glue, Deborah go start the test. He's going to have a grand mal."

Big Bad. Him. Going to. No question about it. Will put his fist to his chest, wheezing, and felt a hand in his hair parting his curls.

"Will, I need you to stay still, we're putting on the electrodes. The test won't hurt, just try to relax for me-"

And suddenly there were a lot of wires on his head. He must have zoned out again...

"Wha's happening?" He cried. Everything was whirring around him like he were on a carousel. His left hand gripped the padding of the bed to find a balance. This was just like encephalitis, he was losing time, and every attempt at cupping reality in his hand made it spill through his fingers.

The dark-skinned woman came into his view again, donning gloves. With her sympathetic tone, she patiently explained, "You're having a lot of seizures, Will. We need to record them so we can see where they're coming from in your brain. Then we can determine the cause and treat it."

He was trying as hard as he could to slow his breathing. "Can't you stop them?" His lip quivered in desperation. Few times in his life had he ever been so afraid.

"Will, your illness is progressing very rapidly, and this will give us the diagnosis we need."

"Anita," he pleaded, finally remembering her name. He reached out, his hand gripping the railing by her. "Please, I- I can't-"
She took his hand in hers. "It'll be okay, Will. You'll slip into it. You won't even realize what's going on."

"No, please, please," and the knot in his throat let loose to emit a sob as tears flooded his eyes, and Anita could stroke his hand all she wanted, she was failing him. He was in a hospital and they were going to let him suffer. Surely he could not live through this pain, his body would give out and he would never know justice, never see his dogs or Alana.

"B-Bar-ney," Will spluttered through tears, his last hope, but Barney just patted his shoulder softly.

"It’s gonna be okay, Will, I promise," he gave a reconciling half-smile.

Will was about to tell him he couldn’t possibly promise that when his broken-faucet emotions started to drain out him. It was happening, just like before, and his brows scrunched in fear.

"Will?" Anita asked, but she knew it was starting. He was going into a grand mal.

All semblance of energy drained from his body. His ears were underwater and his mouth wouldn’t move when he tried to answer Anita. The last thing Will saw were blurry white-uniformed hands gesturing above him. Then he lost all control of himself, and everything was darkness and fear.

"It’s starting from the temporal lobe,” Nurse Landon remarked, examining the spastic movement of the wires on the trail of his patient’s EEG.

Anita watched helplessly as Will lost consciousness. She wished that she could take the pain and fear away, but the nurse inside her knew that this test’s results would help save his life. The illness was advancing far too quickly, and she knew that if not for a diagnosis soon, her patient may not be alive this time tomorrow.

Then the convulsions started, the tonic-clonic spasms of muscle contractions and relaxations. Will’s head slammed back repeatedly into the heavily padded bed, whimpers and snorts peppering the movements. Arms jerked sideways from his otherwise rigid body. She monitored his hands, making sure he wouldn’t hurt himself. Barney, on the opposite side of the bed, wore the same expression of helplessness. When the vomit came, Anita was efficient, wiping his mouth and ensuring that gravity was on his side so he would not choke.

By the fourth minute, Anita was getting worried, and ordered Landon to get a dose of fast-acting lorazepam. Will’s body showed no signs of stopping; a blue tint coloured his lips.

“How is it looking?” She asked him.

Landon glanced at the EEG. “Consistent. It’s been five minutes, he’s going into status epilepticus. If he’s still arrhythmic, he’ll crash if we don’t intervene.”

She nodded, holding her hand out for the little white pills. “His lips are blue, 02 stats are down. Get me a glucose tablet, he’s been vomiting all day and we need to rule out hypoglycemia. I don’t think the drip was enough.”

The lorazepam in her hand, she pulled Will’s cheek away from his locked jaw and tucked the pills in the pocket between his cheek and gums, rubbing the outside of his cheek so the medication would melt faster. In two minutes, his convulsions gradually lessened and finally, Will Graham was still, sweat loosening the glue on the electrodes.

Anita brought the oximeter over and reapplied it to Will’s finger while Barney secured the velcro of the blood pressure cuff across his bicep. She placed the glucose tablet under his tongue, checked for
any bitten part of his cheeks or tongue, and applied ointment to the raw skin on the inside of his lip. The oximeter beeped at his low saturation level, and Barney reached for the nasal cannula, bending the tubing around his ears, focusing on the task and not the lifeless looking man before him. It was only yesterday he had seen Will in a polarized state-

“Can you help get these off?” A voice snapped him back from thought. The nurse was picking the electrodes from Will’s scalp.

“Yeah, sorry,” he apologized.

“No need,” she brushed it off with something between a smile and grimace.

“What dosage did you give him?” Barney asked, trying to remain professional.

“Two 2mg tabs, he should be out-”

“For a while, yeah,” he chuckled sadly. Every other inmate in the Baltimore State Hospital was drugged out of their mind for everyone’s good, but Will was an innocent man, and Barney was watching him crumble under all the drugs. Maybe that’s what made him flip at Dr. Bloom-

“He’s a good man, huh?” The nurse asked. Anita, he glanced at her tag.

“Yeah, yeah... He isn’t like anyone else I work with.”

She nodded, looking down at the patient’s unconscious form. “I believe you. I’ve seen a few other patients from Baltimore State. Usually women weren’t allowed contact with them, but from the ruckus they caused in the ICU, the difference can’t be clearer.”

The last of the electrodes were returned to the machine, and Barney, careful not to dislodge any wires, lifted the limp body back into the wheelchair where Will drooped forward like the chronics in Ward A. Barney shuddered at the thought.

It was a quick trip back to his room, and once Barney lifted him back into bed, the IV was re-established with a hefty dose of anti-convulsants and anti-pyretics. Barney sat in the chair by Will’s bedside, his back turned to the guards.

How could a man go from uncharacteristically violent to comatose in one day? In the time it had taken Barney to clock out from his shift, drive home to his apartment downtown, shower, catch a few hours of sleep, and go back, something had gone terribly wrong inside of Will Graham. Had he missed something? He had followed all procedures when it came to Will’s outburst. Maybe if he were assigned to the Ward C this morning, he would have noticed Will was off. Will was probably half-dead in his cell and Paul checked him off as asleep. Barney may not be the sharpest tool in the shed, but he knew to give a damn about the people who deserved it.

Now all that was left to do was sit and wait for the test results or for Will to wake up. Whichever came first. Barney recalled his file, trying to see if there was anything he had missed that could be relevant. He studied Will’s unconscious form, wondering if there was any chance the man had lied to him overdosing.

No, the staff were required to check everyone’s mouth after medication on Ward C, and however apathetic they were when it came to the prisoners’ welfare, they would ensure they got their medication. The more drooling chronics than manic aggressors, the better.

Barney sighed, looked around the empty room, marble statue guards. There should be someone with him, someone who cares. He recalls Dr. Bloom was his emergency contact, knew how much it
would piss off Chilton that she saw Will before he did. Excellent.

Barney stepped outside to find a payphone, taking the business card she had slipped him from his wallet. His brain buzzed with clips of yesterday, regretting to inform Dr. Bloom of Will’s condition after what had happened. *What’s going on with you, Will?*

Chapter End Notes

i'm really not satisfied with this chapter, i'm sorry for the suckish quality. Next chapter will be up much quicker!
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

i received two wonderful comments today, and that made me realize i never gave you guys chapter 6!

i like this one.

One more flashback chapter, then we'll find out what's wrong with our poor abused puppy Will Graham.

Unfortunately, i can't say when the next chapter will be up, things are getting very busy, but i'm always thinking about my stories, and i will make time.

Voices echoed in Will’s head from the day’s events.

...vomited during your first seizure...

...the matter with your arms?...

You made me chicken soup?...

...considering what happened yesterday...

What happened yesterday...

Yesterday...

White. All Will could see was white. A hard block of a mattress did not yield under his aching back and a thin blanket covered his curled-up body, save for the top of his head and his eyes, which he realized were staring at a padded wall. Nowhere in Will's file was self harm ever mentioned; he knew Chilton just liked the look of the cushioned surface, the dehumanizing quality it gave the occupant. He bet it gave an extra pizzazz to the A1 photo of Tattlecrime.com. Another criminal locked away due to the underdog efforts of investigative journalism. He pictured self-congratulatory smiles and winced. Maybe he needed those padded walls after all... Thanks, Chilton, he thought caustically.

Chilton... Chilton was behind the bars, running his ever-gloating mouth. "...and we can't have that, can we, Mr. Graham?"

Will, realizing he missed most of whatever Chilton was rambling about, stayed silent, not moving from his position facing the wall.

"Catatonic periods can be a symptom of a wide variety of neuroses. It seems your illness is medication-resistant, I wonder what treatment we'll have to resort to..."

That would usually be the point Will turned around, gave him just enough of a response to keep Chilton’s threats at bay, but he couldn't do it this time. He had been here for four months, and it didn't look like he was getting out. His appeal was being “processed,” aka sitting on a pile
somewhere, and he knew his bank account couldn't handle this lawyer’s exorbitant fee for much longer. Life was not worth living. Why not let Chilton do what he wished? Fry his brain until he couldn't remember where, when, why he was. Will was already shaky on the who.

He couldn't move his body if he tried, so heavy with the drugs and the depression it failed to treat that adjusting his position on the comfortless mat was too much.

"Perhaps," Chilton mused on, "the reality of your situation has struck you, the reality your actions have led you to. Maybe," and Will heard that lofty grin taint his voice, "when you scream in your sleep, they are not your cries but the cries of your victims as you impaled them on stag heads."

He paused for a moment, letting his latest insult take effect. The awkward stillness resounded around the room, absorbing in the padded walls. Chilton continued on, relentless. "Your silence is very telling, Mr. Graham, but I fear for your health. It seems a physical is in order. You may not be well enough for a visit from Dr. Bloom. But then, Dr. Bloom doesn't seem quite her best either. Something... off about her lately."

That perked Will's ears up like Winston when he went straight from the front door to the whiskey. What was Chilton talking about? It wasn't an empty observation, no, there was something there, and it took all his energy to focus on keeping his breathing pattern. He couldn't let Chilton know he got to him.

Leather dress shoes groaned down the hall, Chilton’s quiet orders to the orderlies. Infirmary...exam...visitor. Then a group of tech shoes scuffed the floors and the orders started.

“Will Graham, stand up, face the wall, and put your hands behind your head. You are to be moved from your cell to the infirmary.”

Will could barely stand listening to the harsh, authoritarian voice of the police officer that accompanied his transfers. It cut into his ears and forced his mind to retreat farther from reality. The white blended with his shadow, his vision blurry. There was nothing physically wrong with him; over the past few months his post-encephalitic health had waned once again past his usual morose, shaky personage, but it was all psychological. Baltimore had dwindled his personality, his history, his sense of self down to what rung in his head the loudest. He didn’t have the energy to think about it, much less heed the officer’s commands.

“This is your final opportunity to comply. On your feet, with your hands on your head, or we will restrain you.”

It was an obvious threat, but Will took it as almost a relief. Surely his feet would not carry him. They’d handcuff him and put him on a gurney, and whatever happened after that, Will didn’t particularly care. His only goal was to see what was wrong with the woman he could not bring himself to love anymore, for either of their sakes.

The guards stalked into his cell, yelling orders he didn’t bother to listen to. The blanket was ripped off him and the cuffs bit into his wrists, but he made no movements. He simply couldn’t bring himself to care. A tech hastily took his pulse, which had quickened due to the onslaught, and then he was lifted off the bed by his arms. Once it was proven that he wasn’t going to walk, his deadweight body was dropped onto the gurney, strapped in, and wheeled to the infirmary. There the guards untied him, walked him to the exam table, and ordered him to remove his jumpsuit. They were just about to close in on him, when his hand raised to the zipper, and he slowly shrugged himself out of the depersonalizing garment, his blank eyes fixed on the drawers in front of him.

In the system’s eyes, he was not pure empathy, he was not the copycat, or even Will Graham. He
was patient B1329-0, as it was printed on the left breast pocket. It was the Stanford prison experiment in full blast, commands shouted in his face, totalitarian control executed so efficiently. Will thought about what Gideon had said to him and Alana the day they interviewed him in a cell not far from his own. *Maybe you should put a blood pressure cuff to my genitals, I find it gives a much more accurate measure of response.* Will bet the guards felt the same surge over having power over another.

“You are not move unless instructed by the nurse or officers. Any failure to comply with this order will result in chemical restraint. Is this understood?”

Will closed his eyes and nodded, already exhausted from the manhandling and inhuman voices barking orders. His back slumped and he rested his elbows on his thighs, feet dangling off the examination table. Goosebumps had formed on the outside of his arms by the time the nurse came in. She was a down-to-business kind of woman, Will could tell with the efficiency of her supply preparation- a tongue depressor out of this drawer, a thermometer and otoscope from that cabinet. She barely needed to look at her set of keys to know which unlocked each drawer.

His temperature was 99.7, which the nurse knew from his chart was his average after so many post-encephalitic exams. Then came his blood pressure, 90/65, very low compared to his usual anxiety-induced hypertension. She checked the back of his throat, his inner ear, nose, then his eyes. The penlight hurt, and he squinted his head back. It was nothing new- he just had a damn headache from all this to-do over nothing, but the nurse was wary of his actions. After listening to him breath with her stethoscope, she announced she was going to draw blood. The guards seemed hyperaware of his response, so he held his breath as she returned the gadgets and produced two vials, a tourniquet, and a butterfly needle. His heart hammered in his ears, drowning out the doctor's orders. Two guards stepped out of position and held his arm in place, while she instructed him to make a fist, take a deep breath... Once the vials were filled, the needle mark was covered with a cotton ball and tape. The nurse exited, saying another doctor would be in shortly.

Two minutes later, an old, liver-spotted man came in and snapped on a pair of gloves. Will was confused. They already examined him. Why switch doctors?

The first thing he did was ask him to lay down and lift his shirt. The doctor examined was his abdomen. “Hands on your head, do not move them until I tell you so. If there are any painful areas, tell me.” The tips of his fingers palpitated methodically into soft flesh.

“I’ll try to get this over with as quick as possible. Stand up, lower your pants, and bend over with your hands on the table.”

*Oh,* Will thought, but the guards were ready to pounce. There was no way out. So he did as he was told, held his breath through it, coughed as the doctor held his balls. If Chilton made him jump through hoops to see Alana, so be it. It was a price Will had to pay.

The exam was soon complete. No abnormalities were found, granting Will the opportunity to see Alana. By this time, he’d gathered the energy to put one foot in front of the other, though the guards half-dragged him to keep a moderate pace. Will knew he was put into the room first to ensure he was restrained properly before any visitor arrived.

But when he was half-carried into the room, Alana was sitting there, drumming her nails on the metal table. His legs had given out three quarters of the way there, and the guards tight grasp on his arms raised Alana’s brow in concern. Thick leather straps bounded his chest, arms, and legs to the straight-backed, wooden chair.
Usually she would start with a somber but affectionate, “Hi, how have you been?” but Will looked as if the restraints were the only thing keeping him upright. “Will, what’s the matter?”

It took all of his strength to look at her; he needed to know what Chilton was talking about. It didn’t take long to figure out. Rarely did he look in her direction on these visits- the potent, concentrated emotions soaking her eyes were too much, a shock of colour disturbing the cold concrete, the vacant eyes of patients, the solid steel of guards. She overwhelmed him, roused his deadened heart, effortlessly penetrated the fortress protectively encasing the remnants of his personality. This was his body’s design, lock his consciousness outside of himself, condemn this shell of a man to the harshness of his environment so the real Will Graham would stay safe, hidden beneath layers upon layers of emotional callouses. A profound numbness, unquenchable anger, desolate depression all protecting the agonized soul that would never experience the hope, help, and love it so desperately needed. One look, and Alana could flood him with emotions, like a jug of water that cleaned a painter’s brush. A touch of red, an array of blues, black, and gray, gray, gray swirled inside him until he didn’t know what colour he was beyond ugly.

But in turn, Will saw the tempting bone Chilton dangled above him, challenging him to gnaw at it. The first thing he noticed was a fullness to her face he had never seen before, a slight rosiness still tinting her cheeks from the biting cold of a winter afternoon in Baltimore. Then a water bottle near her high-heels. She never carried one, and he was surprised the guards let her have it. And last was the minute, almost unnoticeable jerk of her thigh. Even her first visit at Baltimore, she exhibited no sign of restlessness.


He gave a haunted chuckle that didn’t resemble any laughter. “Neither do you,” he said, angling his head down to study his hand.

Her concern intensified. “What do you mean?”

“When did you start taking anti-depressants?” He made eye contact on the last syllable.

She shifted in her chair and scrutinized him, completely caught off guard. Her professionalism acted as a barrier to her shock. “We’re not talking about me right now, Will, and frankly, that’s none of your business.”

“It is when I’m the reason you’re on them.” His hollow eyes bore holes into hers. It was excruciating looking into her eyes, but he needed to confront her. He needed someone to tell him the truth, and she was his best hope.

She sighed, knowing he wouldn’t let up until she explained herself. “It’s not your fault, Will, things have been very stressful lately, my mother’s in the hospital-”

He shook his head. “You shouldn’t be on them. You need to get yourself off of them, they’re gonna mess with your head-”

“It’s only until I’m feeling better, Will, and that’s none of your concern. Lets talk about something else-”

“Leave.” He delivered the line as stoically as he could, taking cues from the guards. All professionalism was abandoned; she was taken back by his directness, by his coldness. “What?”

“Get out of here. I don’t want to see you again.” The words were like stones in his mouth, he needed to articulate just to spit them out.
But there was her caring, comforting voice again, always trying to soothe him, always understanding just what he needed. “Will, I understand you feel responsible, but there’s no need—”

He fought against his restraints, overlong curls threatening to mask his eyes. The heavy wooden chair knocked against the floor menacingly. He was shouting now, using the last of his energy reserves. “I said leave! Get out of here! Don’t come back!” His mask was breaking, tears threatened to flood his vision.

Alana leaned back in shock.

The guards shouted at him in return. “Cease and desist!”

“Will, calm down, please, we can talk this through—” Alana pleaded.

The leather was bruising his skin, but he fought valiantly anyway, a sob escaping his chest. “Not until she leaves!”

The guards addressed her, “M’am—”

“I’m going,” she said, tears forming in her eyes as Will’s looping shouts echoed down the hall. Don’t come back. She knew what Will was trying to do, but his violent outburst was frightening. Never had she seen his mood swing so violently, never had she seen him so severely depressed that he couldn’t bring himself to walk, or so unraveled that he didn’t care what the guards said.

Once she was back in her car, beyond the rings of barbed wire, she let herself break down. How had he known she was on anti-depressants? Had Chilton somehow found out and told him? Was he experiencing the same side effects? Alana knew she had gained a little weight, but she was counting on the pills to help her get through Will’s appeal, her mother’s illness. She didn’t have the energy to go to the gym when her head was spinning by the time she was done re-reading and triple-checking the legal paperwork.

But it didn’t matter how Will knew. What mattered was that he did that all for her. He was forgoing the only kind face he saw to save her the pain of seeing him in such a state, from the bleakness of the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane leeching her of hope too. Even as a convicted serial killer, Will was still trying to help free others of pain, and it was then that Alana was overwhelmed the cruelty of life. That Freddie Lounds would make a fortune off of demonizing him until the name “Will Graham” was synonymous with Charles Manson or Satan. The world would eat it up hungrily. Alana still didn’t know who killed those five people, but even if it was Will, it wasn’t his fault. He had been ill, he still was in an entirely different way, and the world was content to blame him for their peace of mind.

It took all of Alana’s strength to start the car and keep driving, settling for imagining chewing Chilton out and embracing Will, giving him the contact he needed. She would do everything she could to get his appeal approved, at least get him moved to a low-security ward, get him on the right meds. But her appeal wasn’t approved, then, then... Then they’d cross that bridge when they got there.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Second and last chapter of "what happened yesterday."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will’s shouts echoed through the basement chambers of the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane until he was sure Alana had left. He stopped fighting against the restraints, his energy reserves depleted, and let the guards yank him out of the chair and drag him back to his room. They dropped him in a heap on his cot, and there he stayed, eyes closed, waiting for sleep to warp his thoughts.

He fell into a fretful doze, tossing and turning, sheets wrapping around him like a straitjacket. Alana’s fearful expression haunted him; she was a constant companion in his nightmares. Just a few days ago he’d nearly cut her pretty little jaw in half. Intrusive thoughts knived their way into his consciousness; voice of killers whose minds he’d marinated in whispered their fantasies at the base of his skull in the dark of the basement cell.

Alana’s cold body hovered illuminated in midair, a white dress covering her equally pale skin. Will’s love was made from a boiling cauldron, caressing her creamy skin sent electric shocks to his groin, but it wasn’t enough. His love, his obsession, was overflowing. He needed to honor every part of her, to consume her. Blood spurted and soaked her dress as he drove his bare hands into her chest, impaling her, until his hands held her beating heart, he wanted her pulse to be his, her faint screams to occupy his throat, to vibrate down his mouth, he wanted to taste her fear and consume her divine flesh-

He woke to something lodged in his throat- an ear, his first thought zoomed, but another second later and he realized it was a scream, a scream he had been revitalizing for quite some time now, judging by the rawness of his vocal chords. But the man wasn’t exactly connected to his body. He felt as though he was watching reality unfold from above him, like perusing the contents of security footage as he had done many a time in his previous life. His incessant, hysterical screaming and wide-eyed panic and disgust were all reversed- where they were previously skillfully buried, compacted, and repressed in his gut, they now coated his skin outside of the ruins of old forts. His emotions were like flowers that extended from his chest; they were rooted in his heart, but he only felt them vaguely. All their colour and intensity was lain bare for the world to see.

Sheer panic winded him; the profound persecution he was meant to suffer through staggered him. The confinement of this small basement cell made his chest tighten. There was nowhere to run. Every fiber of his being felt as if it were being scratched against sandpaper. His head was filled with broken glass, and the sharp pain of a migraine stabbed at his brain. Every second spent alive was excruciating, and so, beyond his control, he continued to scream.

Thoughts hovered above his head- *Stop! Stop, they’re gonna come*, his superego begged but the urgency was drained from the sentiment. The shouting of the roused prisoners and retorts of the guards, footsteps thundering down the hall, were lost on his ears.
A concerned voice called his name from just beyond the bars. He recognized the voice, but the sound was so far away, especially when he wasn’t even in his own body, and the noise around him was mostly drowned out by his screams.

Then five men rushed into the cell and seized him. He was forced to the floor within seconds, arms yanked behind him. They tugged down his uniform, pushing him to the floor. Knees dug into his shoulder blades; someone sat on his thighs. The standard issue white boxers were efficiently tugged down, where a stinging needle was pushed into the upper right quadrant of his ass.

But the medication would take time to achieve full effect, and the prisoner’s screams seemed far from over. They zipped his uniform back up and held him there until he felt his arms go into sleeves with no opening. Already the drug was taking hold of his mind, but he realized after a moment he was being put into a straitjacket.

Hard sobs wracked his body, and his wordless screams became “No, no, please!” But a prisoner’s words meant nothing.

The mess of a man was quickly dragged to the solitary confinement ward on the other side of the basement. This room was padded just like his cell but had no furniture or windows, save for the one in the door for fifteen minute observation rounds. The door’s interior was padded and knob-less, leaving the prisoner at the mercy of whoever had the key.

The guards dropped him in a heap on the floor. Will continued his agonized moan into the padded floor until the drug lay claim to his consciousness.

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Will lay half on his stomach, half on his side next to the wall, his arms and legs bent at the same angles the guards left him in. His dead eyes were barely open and he was drooling.

This was how Barney found him when he entered the padded cell with four other hefty men. The tech had thought Will’s breakdown was the hardest to watch, but he at least still had the will to fight. This body before him, drooling in a straitjacket, had no resemblance to the intelligent or empathetic man he had come to know, even as depression took hold of him.

“Will?” Barney hoped to get a response, though may it was best he was out for this...

"I don’t want to hurt you, Will,” Barney said cautiously, "but I have to give you some more medication."

Will didn’t respond, his eyes slits staring at the ground. He could still be asleep for all Barney knew.

Just then, the padded door was opened, and in stepped the sauntering Doctor Chilton, his infamous grin showing his gleaming teeth and beady eyes like a sewer rat. Will, of course, didn’t seem aware of him, until the doctor kneeled in front of the rag doll of a man and lifted his chin in his right hand.

“Well, well,” Chilton smirked. His feeling of triumph came off him in waves, only dulled by Will’s flat affect. “How are we feeling today, Mr. Graham?”

Will’s gaze was all over the place, sluggish blinks failing to clear the haze in his brain. He avoided Chilton’s face dutifully, despite Chilton’s hold on his chin.

“Sit him up,” Chilton ordered over his shoulder, and Barney and Roberto leaned him against the wall. Will gave a muted wince as his sore glute muscle came in contact with the ground.
“Look at me, Will,” he demanded, cupping the inmate’s heavy head with two hands.

An open-palmed hand slapped him in the face.

“Look at me!”

A groan died in his throat a second too late, but still he continued to stare into the distance. It was Will’s last act of defiance. It was all he could do not to give into Chilton’s regime entirely.

“Doctor Chilton!” Barney barked, in shock.

He turned around momentarily, looking Barney right in the eye. “If you want to keep your job, or if you ever want to work in mental health services ever again, which is the only job a college dropout like you will ever get, you will not speak another word. You’ve been toeing the line ever since he came here, and I will not stand for it any longer. Are we clear?”

Barney’s gut instinct was to punch him in the face so hard he’d swallow his damn teeth. But Will needed someone on the inside. He needed one person that would show him so human decency, otherwise some orderly would find him strung up by strips of his bed sheet, and Barney wouldn’t be able to live with himself. This was life or death, and if he needed to kiss Chilton’s ass to save Will’s, so be it.

Barney righted himself, put his fist in his other hand, as if a soldier at ease. “Yes, sir,” he said with as much disrespect as he could muster. He hoped Will would understand he was doing this for him, when he was right-headed again.

Chilton turned his attention back to Will, keeping his head up with a firm grip on his hair. “It looks like you’ve finally had your psychotic break. Tell me, whose body were you envisioning in your nightmares? Cassie Boyle? Doctor Sutcliffe?”

He studied Will’s face intently for any signs of anger. “Or was it poor Abigail Hobbs? Did you finish her father’s work? Slit her throat and let her bleed out on her kitchen floor?”

“No...” came the weak response from Will.

“Well something made you blow your cannon tonight, first at the defective Doctor Bloom, and then at yourself. There are bruises all over your arms, they’re no doubt self-inflicted. And no wonder-your blood test showed no trace of medication.”

Chilton cocked his head to the side, gently put his hand on the very cheek he slapped not two minutes ago. “Now some further... investigation will be in order as to how that could have happened, but in the mean time, you will get the help you need.”

For the first time ever, Barney recognized fear on Will Graham’s face. His gaze passed over Barney’s face, then settled by the tech’s feet.

“Barney will be injecting you with Risperdal, to ensure you will be taking your medication. Jack Crawford and Dr. Bloom have been keeping me from putting you on anti-psychotics, but after this latest episode of yours, well... I assure the FBI’s jurisdiction no longer extends to your treatment here. We should have you confessing to your copy-cat murders in no time, and the many more I’m sure you’ve expertly hidden from the police. And if you don’t improve soon, electro-convulsive therapy is an option readily available. Too bad your previous colleagues won’t get to see the progress you’ll be making- visitors clearly make your mental state quite... unstable. I wouldn’t count on seeing your precious Alana Bloom ever again. Now, Barney.”
Barney felt like he was euthanizing a sick old animal- a pale, ancient elephant imprisoned in a zoo for children to gawk at. An elephant that was pained with the stark horror of its present, but never forgot the expansive African tundras or the pinks and oranges of the sun as it rose.

Barney looked down at the haggard skin and bones of a man, and wished for his sake that the syringe was lethal, some barbiturate cocktail that would slow his heart to nothingness and free his soul of the immense suffering that had burdened him.

The guards assumed their usual positions, holding his ankles and forearms, but he wasn’t going anywhere. Barney straddled him, his knees by Will’s hip bones. “I’ll make it quick.”

Then he tore off the needle cap, flicking at the liquid to get any excess bubbles out, and pushed the needle into his other glute, just firm enough to get past the resistance. Will shut his eyes, his breath caught in his throat, but made no other indication he felt the needle. Even drugged out of his mind, he wouldn’t give Chilton the satisfaction of seeing him suffer.

“Sweet dreams, Mr. Graham,” Chilton said with a twinkle in his eye, as he sauntered victoriously out of the room.

/////////

Will started to regain consciousness in his cell, free of the straitjacket. Something was wrong. He felt just as bad as when he woke up with an ear in his stomach.

His muscles were shaky, any movement of his head caused a violent, stabbing pain. He was going to throw up, but he couldn’t possibly move off his bed. Every second, the pain and nausea grew worse.

“Help,” he cried weakly, but his voice wouldn’t carry down the hall.

“Somebody help me!” Will shouted, but he was cut-off by his own gagging.

He grasped at his head, unaware if he would pass out before he would throw up. The lights were like flash cameras aimed not an inch from his eyes.

Then Will lost consciousness, and his body began to seize, thrown off the bed and onto the floor, where Barney would find him twenty minutes later.

Chapter End Notes

i’m very sorry this chapter took so long. i’m always working on it, but i have near constant writer’s block which is caused by psych issues. But i won’t abandon this story unless i’m in my own version of Baltimore State Hospital! I have probably half of chapter eight done, we have Alana coming into the picture and getting shit done as per usual, but there’s still much more heartbreak to come. i just can’t say when.
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

i just want to make sure everyone understood. The last two chapters took place the day before the beginning of the story, and the end of the last chapter connects with the beginning of the story.

This chapter, and all of the ones to follow takes place chronologically, back in present time at the physical hospital.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Doctor Bloom,” Barney greeted her as her heels clicked down Union Memorial Hospital hall.

“Barney, thank you for being here. It must be way past your shift, I can stay with him now.” Alana greeted him with an all-business tone that she knew she couldn’t keep up for long. Over the course of her visits at the Baltimore State Hospital, she had come to regard Barney warmly, but Alana Bloom was one to steel herself from excess emotion, hoping the facade would provide some semblance of composure.

“It’s no trouble, I wouldn’t leave him with only the guards for company. And I can stay for however long you need, I got nowhere to be,” he gave her a small smile.

“Thank you, Barney, but I think I can take it from here. How has he been since we last spoke?”

Barney sighed, scratching the back of his head. “He had the grand mal during the EEG, they dosed him cause the seizure wasn’t stopping after five minutes. Last I heard, they were talking about an ice bath for the fever. They’re still waiting on the cultures, blood tests should be back any minute. In the mean time, he’ll probably wake up soon. Lorazepam ain’t got nothing on what Chilton’s been giving him.”

The remark didn’t ease Alana’s conscience.

They walked to Will’s room, where officers stopped them at the door. “Identification?”

“I’m Doctor Alana Bloom, forensic psychiatrist, consultant for the FBI, I’m here to assess Will Graham.”

“Is he your patient?” The guard barked in a monotone.

Alana had to be honest. “Not officially, no.”

“Then you have no reason to be here-”

“She’s with me,” Barney asserted. “Will Graham’s her former patient, she’s here to give a second opinion and help diagnose his current condition.” Barney had always found that bureaucratic bullshit went a long way.

The muscular man stepped aside, letting them through.
Alana saw his relaxed form in the bed, thin white hospital blanket near his stomach. She held on tighter to the coat draped over her clasped hands; she couldn’t recall when she had last seen his face free of heart-pounding anxiety, listless depression, or well-played rage, as with yesterday.

But it was different here, she realized. There were no restraints binding his limbs, no cameras or Chilton to separate them. Alana immediately put a hand to his cheek, just because she could. The guards’ reprimand never came, and she said a silent thank you to whatever chance of fate allowed that to happen.

His face was noticeably gaunt, as was the rest of his body. His bones angled out of the thin gown. When they kissed in his house, she realized that she had underestimated his musculature. Will had been well-built, and his frame was one she usually attributed to the type of people that fixed motors.

It was funny, really. At first glance, he seemed pale and scrawny. Then, his forward kiss and intimate touch suggested a bolder man than she originally thought him to be. And now... Now her image of him was of the almost emaciated man in a huge hospital bed, finally in something other than a blue jumpsuit, not far off from a prisoner of war. A prisoner of the war that was quite possibly all in his head, between the man she had fell in love with and the man of his dissociative episodes. That was the night she realized he was experiencing auditory hallucinations, that he was unstable and she couldn’t allow herself to be in a relationship with him.

“H-how long has he been under?” Alana broke the silence, dropping the formal, unattached pretense.

“Almost two hours. And I know he’s got trouble sleeping, but with how many seizures he’s been through in the last day, he could be out for a while.”

“Lana...” Will slurred, and Alana and Barney’s conversation was immediately terminated.

“Will,” she breathed, a small smile curving around his name on her lips.

Barney was suddenly aware he was intruding upon a very private moment. “I’m gonna, uh, be right back... Talk to the nurses, and... things.” He hastily left them, alone save for the guards, who Alana tried her best to ignore.

Will’s eyelids were too heavy; he could only keep them half-open. “Don’ be mad a’me,” he slurred.

Confusion worried her face. “Why would I be mad at you?”

She looked as though she wanted to run her fingers through his hair, comfort him in any way she could. “You’re very sick, Will, it clearly affected your thinking for sometime beforehand-”

“No...” He weakly shook his head.

Alana gave him a concerned look, opting for changing the subject. “They said your fever went down after you were admitted, but it’s gone back up, and that you were having a lot of seizures.”

Will pulled in a long breath, “Doesn’... madder...” He didn’t want to talk about any of this.

Her confusion continued. “Will, I’m very worried about you, the drugs aren’t bringing the fever down, they’re still waiting on your test results-”

“Th’dogs okay?”

She paused, momentarily struck by the drastic change of subject. Maybe he wanted to focus on something other than his illness, but Alana was certain it was more that he didn’t care what happened
She stared at the wall to force the tears back into her eyes.

She sniffed, swallowed the emotions that quivered her voice. “Yeah, they’re all doing well. They, uh... they always know when I visit you, they bark and sniff at my coat.”

Will closed his eyes instead of nodding. His head, his arms, his whole body felt as if weights were placed on top of him. Some of the rigidity had returned while he was asleep, despite the muscle relaxant. All the drugs in his system made his brain feel like it had been in a blender.

He couldn’t believe Alana was here. In fact, she probably wasn’t. Because the real Alana wouldn’t be here, not after he told her to stay away. He didn’t deserve the real Alana, and so his mind conjured a hallucination similar to but not the real thing.

It was easy to see the difference. This Alana was not the same woman he had seen yesterday, under harsh lights and surrounded by brutalism. This Alana was engulfed in white, and her warm, soft hands covering his were surely the closest thing to home he’s ever felt.

Will had doubted what was real many a time, but this time, there was no reason to question-*this Alana was an angel, and angels take people to Heaven*. He would be with her forever, perusing the fields, the dogs playing, weaving in between them happily, and he could introduce her to his parents. Fish with his dad. Meet his mother. He had swam through this sea of turmoil long enough, and now Alana had come to bring him Home again.

Alana looked skeptically at him, giving an automatic half smile back but her face consumed by confusion. “Why are you smiling, Will?”

It took all of his strength to reach his hand toward her, as far as his strength would allow. Seeing Will’s strain, she quickly took his hand in both of hers, instantly noting the heat radiating from it. *This is really bad...*

Such relief had not flooded Will in years, or perhaps ever. Euphoria spread through his arms and legs like the pleasant warmth and fogginess after a few glasses of wine. He would never again have to long for her touch; there would be no restraints or drugs or doctors. Nothing to fix, because nothing was broken.

“You’re n’angel,” he said, and tears flowed freely as he marveled at her beauty, at the pure peace in his heart at her hands on his, the pain of this world soon to be left behind. Alana was the most beautiful sight he had ever laid eyes on.

Alana blushed at the compliment, but the way he said it gave her pause. As if he wasn’t complimenting her, just stating fact.

“What’s the matter?” She asked, thumbing his tears. Hoping he didn’t see hers still trying to break through the surface.

“Can- can we... go now?” His voice was hesitant and child-like, as if Alana were his mother and he were asking permission.

It was devastating to witness. All of it. The encephalitis, the arrest, the trial, the visits watching him deteriorate helplessly before her, the lack of contact, the deep depression he had fallen into. The anger in his eyes yesterday, the way his eyes betrayed him, screamed for him *can’t you see I’m protecting you?*

And now whatever this was, the seizures, the fever. It was attacking his body, and now his brain. Again. His confusion cleaved cracks in her stoic mask, vision blurring before she felt tears track
down her cheeks.

“Go where, Will?”

“Heaven,” his voice broke, and so did her heart.

Her throat tightened as her shoulders hitched. She squeezed his hand tightly in between hers.

Will seemed confused as to why she was crying, but not as affected by it. “I thought I... did penance, and...” his brow furrowed in worry as much as he could under so much medication. “A-are we going?”

She nodded, momentarily covered her mouth, trying to gain some composure. “Yes, Will.” She looked into his eyes, forcing herself to smile. She wanted more than anything to give him peace, if only for a moment. “We’re going to Heaven.”

Relief flooded his features. “Good,” his sublime smile was back, but it only made Alana’s insides twist more. “I couldn’t make it much... long’r...”

That’s when Alana started praying. *If anyone is out there, help him. He doesn’t deserve any of this. Please, I’ll give anything, just get him healthy and get him acquitted.*

His smile suddenly faded and his eyes drooped further, as if he were slipping into sleep rather quickly. Alana was just about to say something when he jerked his head, an unencumbered moan ejecting from his throat. That was before his eyes rolled back and his body began to convulse violently, the machines beeping all at once.

Alana’s brain snapped into doctor mode. “Go get someone,” she ordered one of the guards, and the command in her voice enacted one into action.

She shifted to the other side of the bed, where his body was facing, started the timer on her watch. His movements were too extreme to position him on his side without potentially hurting him or herself in the process. While she waited for the nurses, it was all she could do to stand beside him and watch.

A horde of doctors soon trampled into his room, in the midst of a heated debate.

“Get me two milligrams lorazepam.”

“He just had that same dose four hours ago and he’s on a drip-”

“Which clearly isn’t enough-”

“This guy’s on four different psychotropic medications, he just started a new one yesterday, and with the fever and seizure meds we gave him, he’s gonna overdose-”

“Or he’ll die from status epilepticus. Which would you prefer?”

“I’d prefer to wait it out longer. His liver’s gonna get shot. I had a patient seize for half an hour and he was fine!”

“Did your patient have a temperature of a hundred and five a few hours ago?”

The doctor stopped, keenly eyed the seizing man before him. “We need to get him into an ice bath. It’s the only way.”
“And how are we supposed to do that?”

“Sedate him just enough that his convulsions lessen. We need to rule out the possibility of fever-induced seizures. Either way, we’re getting his temperature down. He’s already a likely candidate for brain damage.”

Chapter End Notes

i had most of this chapter written when i posted the seventh. i haven't written in a while, and i'm sorry. i'm wracking my brain for this stuff. You might get to know what's wrong with him next chapter, but if not, definitely the next chapter. Sorry i suck.

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2017: I will probably never finish this unfortunately, so if you want to know what illness he had ******SPOILERS****** he had Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome, an illness caused by a severe negative reaction to anti-psychotic medication. The doctors would have figured it out, taken him off the medications, and he gradually would have gotten better. Then a possible transfer to another prison before he was acquitted. :)

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