

## **A shade did weave a dream**

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# **A shade did weave a dream**

by [louise\\_lux](#)

## Summary

Set during season one, some point after the events of episode four 'Oeuf':

“I was going to try psilocybin therapy with you, too,” Hannibal said.

“So that's why you asked me over, so we could both hallucinate in your dining room?”

“Not both at the same time but, after Abigail had left, I had planned to ask your permission to administer a dose.”

## Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

The plane touched down into Baltimore with a jolt, waking Will from a dream of his dogs in the snow. They were eating something, but he couldn't see what it was, and worry wound its way through his gut. He blinked, tasting the bitter coffee he'd drunk to try and stay awake. It had failed, clearly. People crammed themselves into the aisle, tugging bags from overhead lockers and elbowing each other while struggling into their coats. A good time to check his phone: one call from Alana, no message, and three missed calls and a voicemail from Hannibal, inviting him to dinner last night.

The dogs charged him when he got home. Soft fur under his hands was a blessing after the stale air and man-made surfaces of the plane and car. Alana had stopped by that morning, and there was fresh water and food for them, some of it splashed and scattered on the newspaper he'd put down. Will cleaned it up and dumped the papers in the trash, made himself a cup of coffee and ate a sandwich made from a slice and a crust, and then took the dogs out into the field. The air was biting cold but good, and he was glad to work up a sweat with them. It was late afternoon by the time he took the dogs back, and the sun was falling behind the treeline, turning the bare branches into a complex black latticework against molten light.

Body satiated, his mind still itched, restless with other people's nightmares and bad thoughts. Maybe he could work; that usually helped. But what he really wanted was something he'd become more addicted to than he'd like to admit to anyone; he wanted to talk to Hannibal.

Hannibal answered his call on the first ring.

"Will. I was just thinking of you."

"I would've thought you'd have better things to think about."

Hannibal's soft laugh was warm, and it made Will happy in a simple way, like sunlight on his skin. "Would you like to come over for dinner?"

"I was hoping you'd ask. My fridge is a wasteland." They talked a little more, and then Hannibal rang off. It was presumptuous to call your psychiatrist, or even a friend, and expect dinner invitations. But Hannibal wasn't precisely either, and Will didn't mind presuming. He scrolled through his recent incomings and called Alana.

"Did Hannibal tell you what he did?" she said.

"No, what?"

"He took Abigail out of hospital without even asking me." She sounded angry still, in a cold and tired way.

"Was there a reason for him to do that?"

"Ask him why. The reason as far as I can tell is that he's getting way too involved with her, and it's not helping Abigail. Hannibal used to listen to me, but this thing with Abigail-- it feels *different*." She sighed. "You're a part of it too. You both need to be more careful with her."

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“What did you do that got Alana so pissed at you?” Will asked, following Hannibal through to his kitchen. A bottle of red wine was uncorked next to the fruit bowl, two glasses next to it.

“She didn't tell you?” Hannibal paused at the counter. He picked up the corkscrew and slid it into a drawer, and filled Will's glass. “I took Abigail away from hospital without asking Alana's permission.”

Will frowned, and studied him for a moment. “Why did you do that?”

Hannibal handed him a glass. “You're aware that I can be unconventional in my treatments.”

“You did something unconventional with Abigail,” Will said.

Hannibal nodded. “I gave her psilocybin.”

Will stared. “You did what? Why?”

“An extremely mild dose. It can help those suffering from psychological trauma. It can help turn painful memories into a source of strength, in some cases.”

“In some cases, not all by any means. Hallucinogens have never been tested thoroughly enough for anyone to know their efficacy. You know that. Do I need to even say that owning them is illegal?”

Hannibal seemed unfazed. “What I know is that you could reasonably say that about any drug that treats the brain. We understand very little about any of them. I'm not going to tell the police, and Abigail certainly isn't. Are you, Will?”

Will bit his lip. “Of course not.”

“So where does that leave us?”

“And you didn't tell Alana any of this because you knew she wouldn't let it happen.” Will pressed the heel of his palm to his temple, as if pushing the headache that threatened back into his head. “Is Abigail okay?”

“Abigail enjoyed the experience. I believe she was able to find some of the mental peace that has been missing. For an evening, at least. She talked about family, and love.”

Will paced. He'd read a little about such therapies, studies of trials in the 50s and 60s, but this was way beyond his range of experience. “Did she talk about her father?”

“No, in fact she fantasised that Alana and I were her parents.”

“Alana was here with you?”

“Yes, eventually. She took the place I had intended for you.”

Her fathers, Hannibal had said. Will tried to imagine himself as part of that small and broken family of three, but he hardly knew where to start. "You wanted me to be there," he said.

"I was going to try psilocybin therapy with you, too," Hannibal said.

"So that's why you asked me over, so we could both hallucinate in your dining room?"

"Not both at the same time but, after Abigail had left, I had planned to ask your permission to administer a dose."

"You really believe it would good for me? I feel like I already live my entire life on the edge of one constant hallucination."

Hannibal stepped closer, his face grave and his voice earnest. "You desire control. An experience like this would help you find that, would give you access to your deepest fears and see them for what they are; just shadows. I would be your guide through the experience, here all the time to lead you."

Will pictured himself tripping, Hannibal watching him calmly. Maybe talking to him in his deep steady voice while Will got lost in his own mind. The thought was oddly comforting.

"I believe it could help you," Hannibal said. "I could help you to discover peace of mind, and bolster your strength against the dark."

Will moved so that he had the wall at his back, a primitive shelter from the thoughts battering his mind. "Don't you think I'm strong?"

"Do you?" Hannibal asked. He seemed far away, distant across the vast kitchen.

Will sighed shakily. "I used to."

Hannibal came a little closer: "What if it didn't hurt any more, to see the things you see every day?"

"It *should* hurt. I don't want to change that."

"Yet you're unable to cope with the images that intrude into your thoughts, the nightmares that wake you every night. You're scared that you'll be permanently damaged."

"I... maybe. Isn't it too late to try to *fix* me?"

"It's not a matter of fixing. You said yourself your mental capacity and strength are failing. You had them once. The moment that you decide you want your power back is the moment you begin to have it once more."

Will noticed the teapot on the counter. It was glass, and next to it sat a delicate white cup and saucer. They were clean and dry, waiting.

"Do you... do you still want to ask me?" Will said.

They way Hannibal watched him made it easy to look back, Will realised. He hid everything under his diamond-hard surface.

“I do. Will you take tea with me, Will?”

When Will nodded, Hannibal moved to fill his stainless steel kettle, and set it to boil.

Will made his way to the armchair and sat down, and watched Hannibal move around his kitchen. He took a small wooden box from one of the cupboards. It looked like oak, with two brass hinges and a tiny lock. Hannibal opened it and took out a paper package. He opened another drawer and drew out a set of white electronic scales.

“How much do you weigh?” Hannibal said.

“I—I don't know. 195 pounds?”

Hannibal looked over at him, and Will was intensely aware of it, literally weighing him up. “Let us say 193.”

He weighed some out, then dropped them into the teapot and poured steaming water onto them. They spun slowly in the convection currents, unravelling like knotted string as their fibres absorbed water.

“How was your case?” Hannibal asked, wiping his hands on his apron.

“Traumatic.”

He welcomed Hannibal's small smile, and tried smiling back.

“Have you tried this before?” Hannibal asked.

“Never. I didn't have an experimental phase as a teenager. I had a 'Dear God, get me out of this boatyard' phase'. I worked too hard.”

“Hallucinogens might have accomplished that, as much as hard work. Perhaps you never experimented because you didn't feel safe enough.” He poured a cup of tea and brought it over to Will. It was golden in the white china.

“I don't know if I feel safe now,” Will said, staring down into it. “I feel... light, like I'm made of straw.”

“Then I'll make sure no wolves come to blow you down.”

The tea tasted bitter, of earth and roots, and the heat of it seeped through the china to warm his hands. He drank it all in three mouthfuls, watching Hannibal watch him.

“I don't feel any different,” he said, after a minute.

“You won't for a little while. Relax, and I'll cook.”

Will tried. He watched Hannibal move around his kingdom, opening cupboards, retrieving utensils, laying out vegetables on the chopping board. He finally took out a skillet, so oiled that it looked like black glass, and then, from the fridge, something wrapped in greaseproof paper.

“What are we going to eat?” Will asked, after a while.

“Fish,” said Hannibal. “Mackerel fresh from the Chesapeake.”

“We ate fish all the time when I was a kid. Halibut, sturgeon, John Dory, anything we could catch for free. Oysters even, sometimes.”

“Does it remind you of family and home?”

“I’m not sure about family, but home, yes. The river near my house, fishing there.”

“Do you fish often?”

“When I was a kid, I thought I’d never do it again if I got the chance to stop. Same with the boat motors. But now they’re what I turn to.”

“That’s why I chose it. I want you to feel secure here.”

Will laid his head back against the chair, a heavy feeling flowing down his thighs and calves. There were knots in his stomach, slight cramps that he guessed were the mushrooms at work. He watched Hannibal under his lashes, letting himself be lulled by his neat economical movements. Hannibal began to make a batter, with egg and flour and what looked like beer. He realised after five minutes, when Hannibal said his name, that he’d been drifting, trying to remember the precise taste of his first beer. It was tangled with the smell of hot sun on wet wood, glittering with fish scales, and the reek of fish guts.

“I think it’s starting to work,” he said.

Will closed his eyes against sensory input, but behind his lids he saw dead families, so he opened them again. Light gleamed across the stainless steel fridge door, just like the ones in the labs. This room was made of lines and precision, and Hannibal completed it somehow: this kitchen was his own lab, and he was an upright, strong presence moving with purpose and focus, and even though Hannibal had busied himself with physical tasks, Will was aware of that power trained solely on him.

Will drifted, hearing Hannibal from a distance, his body heavy and his thoughts rushing like water. If that were the case, then his sense of reality was a dam. It was blackened and chipped, walls rising up beyond sight, and his black silted imaginings strained at its walls, waiting to rush through the cracks and drown him. Images formed lightening fast in his mind, changing and whirling. A sharp stab of adrenaline burst in his stomach. It tasted of panic.

“God. I don’t feel good.” Will tried to stand. The room didn’t spin around him, but surfaces seemed fluid and shifting.

Hannibal came close and knelt in front of him. He took Will's hands in both of his. They were hard and warm, and they touched his only lightly, as if afraid to push or presume. His eyes sought Will's. Sparks moved in their depths. "I'll anchor you. Let your thoughts go where they wish. I'll be here, your weight against the tides."

Hannibal let go and moved away. He came back and pressed a half full wine glass into Will's hands. "Drink this. Alcohol ameliorates the strongest effects of the psilocybin, and will help balance you. There. Just a mouthful."

Acidic grape filled his mouth, part wonderful and part nauseating.

"How do you feel?" Hannibal said.

"How do I feel? Like I want to talk to you." He thought about words, and the way they slithered out of him without control, sometimes, when Hannibal was around. They had just now. "I feel like that a lot, recently." Like that.

"Then I'm doing my job properly."

"Am I your job?"

"Only in one sense. You're also my friend."

"Am I? I don't make friends easily."

"I'm aware. If you want to talk, we can. But not here."

Will stood, and let Hannibal follow him through the house, a dark shadow with soft and careful footsteps. He passed a dining room; a sort of marble sitting room that looked like a museum; and finally Hannibal's office. There were two sleek dark grey armchairs facing each other, and behind them an oak desk with a single glowing lamp.

"I like this room."

"Because it is familiar."

"Yes." They took their places in the two chairs. "So, how does this go?" Will asked. There was heat in his stomach from the wine, and now a great settling calm fell on him like a blanket. It filled his veins, and he smiled. Hannibal smiled back.

"It goes however you choose it to go."

"I choose that you choose."

"Well." Hannibal folded his hands together. "Tell me about your dreams, Will."

Will told him, as best he could, about the nightmares that woke him at night. Sometimes once, sometimes twice.



Hannibal nodded. "Your mind doesn't have recourse to any other outlet, no way of purging the images you see every day except through your subconscious."

And increasingly the conscious, Will wanted to say, but didn't. Some part of him needed to keep that clutched to his own heart. Words shaped themselves in his mouth, ready to slide out. "I have you now."

Hannibal gazed at him silently for a few moments, then nodded. "You can tell me anything."

Will let his body sag into the chair, its expensive stuffing an embrace. He tuned his hearing to the street, trying to detect normal sounds of neighbours parking cars in their drives, doors slamming, voices in the street, dogs. Nothing. Instead he could hear Hannibal's soft out-breath.

"This house is very quiet, almost unnaturally so, as if it were soundproofed."

"It's why I chose it. I like privacy."

Will leaned his head back against the chair, watching Hannibal through his lashes. "We're alike in that respect."

"You value privacy. I would guess that lowering those barriers is hard. Intimacy is difficult, or almost impossible, for you."

Will snorted. "I'm *intimate* with people every day to an extent where it turns my stomach."

"Most people would assume that intimacy used in this context refers to matters of a sexual or romantic nature," said Hannibal. "You are intimate with the worst parts of us."

"Not true." Not entirely true. "I've been intimate with others. Affection, sex, shared interests, hobbies."

"You make it sound like a laundry list of the mundane. Does love belong on that list?"

Will shook his head. "I don't know. I've never... I mean, I haven't had much experience of that."

"Is that something you'd like to talk about?"

"No... maybe... No. It hardly seems relevant." He pushed his fingers along the cool slender wood of the chair arm. "But nothing should be off limits, should it?"

"Nothing is off limits for me where you are concerned, Will."

He looked up to see Hannibal's gaze fixed on him, as it always was. Hannibal's words, their meaning, brushed over his skin like a touch. "That's.... quite something to offer. You haven't know me for very long. Am I so interesting?"

Hannibal's gaze drifted infuriatingly over Will's right shoulder, even as Will tried to recapture it. "I saw an opportunity for honesty and I took it."

“Are you often not honest?”

“As much as I know how to be. Not unlike you. If you were honest with those you were intimate with, about how your mind worked, about your abilities, they would run screaming. Is that how it goes?”

“No one's screamed as yet. They've all run though, eventually. I don't think you'd run.”

He flinched at the implications of that. He hadn't intended to say it, or to even have this conversation, and why were they even talking about it? Will tried to track back over the past few minutes.

“You wouldn't give me psilocybin to make me more suggestible, would you, doctor?”

“Do you feel suggestible, Will?”

“Yes.” He laid his head back and watched Hannibal through his lashes, seeing him waver and darken. “You must know that.”

“Why do you feel I would do something like that?”

“Why would you drug me, with the twin results of stranding me at your house and making me highly susceptible to any attempts to suggest and manipulate? That might be the pathology of a sexual predator. But you're not that.”

“You seem very certain about that.”

“I've met enough to know. You're motivated by the urges of the mind, not the body.”

He smiled, and it drew an answering soft curve from Hannibal's mouth. “Will, you should drink more wine.”

The wine filled his throat, luscious and rich with fruit and bitterness. Hannibal watched him swallow, eyes tracking to his lips.

“I'm not driving home tonight, am I?” Will said.

“No, it would be unsafe. You'll stay here with me,” said Hannibal. “You can have your own bed.”

“I don't sleep well.”

“You'll sleep well tonight, I promise. You're safe here.”

Will let his eyes slide closed, tension sliding from him like a heavy cloak. He saw a bed, dressed like his own in hardwearing grey cotton sheets. Unlike his, they held Hannibal, and he was naked, and he was looking up at Will. He breathed out slowly, seeing the image as clearly as if it were on film, as if it had already happened.

“How do you feel?” Hannibal asked.

Will opened his eyes. Hannibal's mouth was stained faintly dark pink from the wine. "The truth? I feel strange. I feel... released."

"You are allowed to feel that way. Have you ever tried to be intimate with the best part of someone?"

"I've tried." Will took a mouthful of wine. "Didn't work. You're right, intimacy is impossible. Sex, love, doing the weekly shopping, combined laundry, all of it."

"You live on the edge of control at all times. I imagine another human being in the equation threatens that control."

"You're in my equation."

"But our conversations are far removed from the domestic or romantic sphere."

Hannibal had made him breakfast, and they'd eaten it in Will's motel room, curtains drawn and the bed still rumpled nearby, the pillow still warm from Will's head. The air in the room had been musty, sleep-filled, and Will tried to remember feeling self-conscious about his bare legs. He hadn't. Hannibal had been to his home, and cared for his dogs, had fed them, had fed Will in his own house

"No, that's not true." He shook his head. "You're there everywhere I look. You insinuated yourself into my life without me even noticing. At home, at work."

"Or perhaps you did the same to me," Hannibal said. "You didn't have to obey Jack's wishes. I gave you a get-out clause from our conversations almost immediately. Your psych-eval was complete. You stayed."

Will stood, and the shadows from the corners of the room rushed in. He moved closer and took another breath, and heard it shaking in his mouth. He could smell Hannibal, his senses seemingly jacked up to the maximum— he was a mixture of clean cotton, expensive hair wax and faint aftershave – almost a maddening smell; too clean, too simple for the man who owned it.

"What do you *want*?" Will said, and felt the shift from one reality to the next as Hannibal looked up at him.

Seconds seemed to pass like poured tar, but Will was aware that time had become increasingly subjective. How long had he been here? How long had this conversation lasted? An hour? Ten minutes? Hannibal rose, and came close until he was almost too near. Off balance, Will swayed, and Hannibal put his hands on Will's waist.

"Careful, the floor is a long way down. I wouldn't want you to end up on your knees." His palms radiated heat through Will's shirt, flat and hard and holding him in a loose embrace. "It's not a question of what I want."

Will moved closer, drawn helplessly by his nearness and warmth. "Then how do you explain this evening? I'm here, I can't leave, and you've made it so you can open the doors and look

straight into my mind.”

Hannibal leaned close, as if sharing a secret in a crowded room, his lips almost touching Will's ear. “I was curious to see what would happen. To see how open to suggestion you could allow yourself to be. To extend your capacity for intimacy. To see you expose yourself, to let yourself be guided by my hands, my voice. You're safe here, Will.”

“You keep saying that.”

“I mean it.”

It made his breath come more sharply, to think that Hannibal would make this happen, that he would cast ethics aside so easily, and that he liked Will like this. Had thought about opening Will up, wanted it. Had planned carefully to achieve this.

Will's cock began to thicken, filling with blood as his heart rate picked up. Hannibal's hand tightened on his waist.

“What are we doing?” Will asked. He breathed in Hannibal's warmth.

“Will,” Hannibal said, and his voice was low.

“Why don't you... suggest something?” Will said.

Hannibal's gaze flickered, and dropped to his lips. “What makes you think I haven't already?”

“God,” Will breathed. The room tilted under his feet, walls shifting for several seconds.

“Increased heart rate will push the drug around your body more quickly,” Hannibal said. “But the effects will lessen soon. It was a light dose.”

“I'm not sure I want them to,” Will said, and he put his hands on Hannibal's shoulders.

“That can be arranged.”

“Do you mean that?”

“If you're sure, yes.”

Hannibal left him and came back with the white cup. “The psychoactive ingredients have had time to percolate more thoroughly. Though the taste has suffered.”

It was a quarter full, only a mouthful, and had been warmed. Will took it and drank, grimacing at the bitter taste, as Hannibal watched him. He handed the cup back, feeling as if they had made a pact, although he was hazy on the terms.

Hannibal held a rough brown cube of sugar between thumb and finger. “Eat,” he said, and he waited.

Will moved forward one step, the muscles in his back, buttocks and thighs tight and trembling, until he could easily lean and take the sugar into his mouth. The tips of Hannibal's fingers were hard, like those of a musician or a labourer.

“I feel like Alice, about to outgrow all the space in the room.”

“Unlike her, you direct your own transformation,” said Hannibal, and he slid his thumb between Will's lips. A smooth-filed nail scraped against his tongue. Hannibal was so close, eyes dark and hooded as he watched Will's mouth. “It's our first instinct,” he murmured. “To suck.

Will moaned, unable to keep the sound in. His knees threatened to fold, as if he'd come already. The cloying sweetness of sugar flooded his mouth, underlaid by the plain salt of Hannibal's skin, by the taste of him. The *taste*. Will swallowed around the thumb, and through his half closed eyes Hannibal was composed entirely of light and shade, a phantom.

Hannibal had slid his thumb deeper by degrees, until the knuckle of his first finger was pressing against Will's upper lip. The beat in his ears was his blood, he was sure. Beating frantically in his temples, and his cock. Will found himself sucking hard, making wet obscene sounds, until Hannibal gently slid his thumb away.

The buckle of Hannibal's belt looked like gold. It might be, knowing Hannibal's taste for luxury, in both things and people. Will didn't fit in the materialistic spaces of Hannibal's life; he was other, a wild thing to be kept apart. He shivered as Hannibal touched his cheek, a damp thumb skimming his jaw. Below his belt, Hannibal's erection was an obvious ridge in the front of his pants. It would only take a small shift of Will's hand to smooth his palm over it. He did, slowly, watching Hannibal's breathing change, and then he carefully let his knees fold, and lowered himself down.

“You're not making rational decisions,” Hannibal said, very gently.

“I don't think this is about rational decisions, do you?”

“If we do this, I would be taking advantage.”

“Not 'would', *are*. And it's my decision.”

“Are you all right?” Hannibal said, softly.

Will nodded. Hannibal touched the side of Will's jaw with his fingertips, tilting up his head so that he was gazing up into Hannibal's eyes, and the heat there shook him. Hannibal touched a thumb to Will's lips, and Will licked the tip of it. Hannibal dug his thumbnail in briefly and hard, and Will gasped. The brief sharp pain slid down to his gut like a shot of scotch.

Hannibal's belt was at eye height, and below that the line of his erection. The belt fell open easily, making the fine wool of Hannibal's pants sag. Underneath there were shirt tails, and some expensive dark grey underwear in smooth, soft fabric. He ran his hands over it, lost in the sensation.

Will sat on his heels and pushed the shirt aside, and eased down Hannibal's underwear. His knuckles brushed the hot skin of Hannibal's lower stomach. There was a thin line of hair there, wiry and almost shockingly bestial compared to the neat perfection of the rest of him. Will drew out his cock, running his fingers over the tight skin, marvelling at how smooth it was. He might've gone on doing only that, if Hannibal's fingers hadn't wound into his hair.

Hannibal's voice was like silk in the darkened room: "Tell me your next irrational decision."

"No. This makes sense." It did now, and perhaps it wouldn't tomorrow, but that didn't seem to matter.

"Tonight, in this space, you've allowed yourself to take anything you want," Hannibal said. His hand moved to cup the back of Will's head, firm and gentle.

Will was taking this for himself, and Hannibal was letting him. Was willing. Was encouraging. Lust hit him like a spike of electricity, fizzing through his blood. Hannibal's scent was heavy in the air, and his heated skin was so close to Will's mouth that all he had to do was lean in a little, and then Hannibal's cock was sliding between his lips.

He couldn't move then, unable to process the surge of sensory input: heat, weight, texture, the sense of Hannibal above him, seemingly still and yet composed of a thousand tiny motes of movement and sound. His cock was leaking a small slick of salt fluid onto Will's tongue; proof of how much Hannibal wanted this, or at least how much it pleased him to have Will here, like this. Will put his hands on Hannibal's thighs, panic stirring once more.

He could see himself all too easily: hungry and desperate to consume, to suck life into himself, and Hannibal must know that. This was what Hannibal had brought him to. This was Hannibal's design. Even as desire burnt along his nerves like acid at the thought, he noted it, tucking it away for further examination.

"What do you need, Will?"

"I don't know. I'm afraid."

"You're afraid of yourself. Of your own capacity to see life through another's eyes. You need to be inside your own mind, and your own body."

To suck, Hannibal had said, *our first instinct*, to draw out nourishment and life. They'd been feeding off each other from the beginning, Will saw, with an almost frightening clarity. It made perfect sense then to fall forward and take Hannibal deep into his mouth. He had no technique and limited skills, and soon Hannibal's hand curled around his throat, tightening until Will had to stop. Will shuddered, arousal wrapping tight around him.

"Please," he gasped.

Hannibal loosened his grip, and stroked his fingers up along Will's throat, tilting up his chin. "This position will make penetration easier on you."

"I don't want it to be easy."

Hannibal's thumb slid across his upper lip, and then he trailed his hand down to Will's throat again, cupping it lightly. His fingertips dragged lightly at Will's stubble. "Then it will make it more pleasurable for me, if that's how you'd prefer it."

Will moaned as Hannibal slid his cock into his mouth and began to thrust, shallowly and then more pressingly, with more force. He wanted to take it all, and Hannibal appeared intent on helping him.

The taste was like nothing else, a secretion of alkalies and acids which, if he studied them, would unlock secrets about this man. It covered his tongue as he let Hannibal work his way deeper, threatening to choke him, but never quite doing so. He stayed still, and let Hannibal move him as he wanted, head tipped back and eyes sliding closed. Hannibal's breath hitched above him, and Hannibal pushed his free hand tight into Will's hair, winding the longest curls around his fingertips. He pushed the last inch into Will's mouth and throat. Will obeyed the urge to gag, convulsing, and felt soothing fingers on throat, and then Hannibal's soft low voice.

"Are you where you want to be, Will?"

He moaned, and nodded, and pulled at his own clothes, unbuttoning just enough to force his hand into his own underwear and pull out his cock. His nerve endings sang as he rubbed his palm hard up over his own erection. God, he was wet, dripping inside his clothes, and even the cool air hitting his skin made him gasp.

Hannibal's hands tightened on him, and he withdrew from Will's mouth just briefly, before entering again in a long steady push that forced his cock deeper than before, opening him up in ways that Will had never experienced, or would have been able to predict.

"Do you feel powerful, Will?" Hannibal said.

His voice was somewhere other than his usual smooth speech now, and Will exulted. He tried to nod against Hannibal's grip, tried to breathe where Hannibal was invading his throat, but he struggled with both. Instead, he clung to Hannibal's hip with one hand, and tried to stroke himself in messy disjointed movements with the other. His chin was wet with spit, and Hannibal's cock slid out with a wet sound that filled his ears.

"Oh god, more," Will said, before Hannibal filled his mouth again.

He'd never had sex like this before. The last time had been years ago. But Hannibal had dismantled a piece of the wall he'd built, and had somehow walked through. Will surged closer, wanting to meet him. Hannibal pulled him in, and thrust in and out, moving more smoothly now, and harder, and each time Will gagged, he fucked him through it, fingers soft on his throat, a gentle caress, and tight in his hair.

The muscles in Hannibal's thighs were trembling; the tiny motions traveled through Will's palm. He opened his eyes and looked up, and what he saw made him moan louder than before: Hannibal's gaze was fixed on Will's mouth, his lips drawn back, sweat gathering on his forehead and upper lip. He looked lost, and Will almost came right then. He shouldn't

have seen him like that, as if it should've been private even from Will. He squeezed himself hard, to the edge of pain.

Under his knees, the carpet was too soft, like he might begin to sink through the floor, like he was something soft and melting, and he was vaguely aware that the headspace he was in was abnormal, even for him. This could be a dream, as easily as it could be waking, and that meant Hannibal was a dream too, wavering above him like a flame.

For a second as he looked up, moonlight flickered through shifting branches behind Hannibal's head, forming dark rays around him as if he were some sort of god of the forest, or a horned beast.

He stared. Hannibal stared back, and Will heard Hannibal's breath hitch and then stop. Someone made a sound and he realised it was himself, muffled around the flesh in his mouth. Hannibal was holding his head so gently, so gently as he pushed deeper, body tensing even tighter under Will's palms as he came in Will's throat. There was no taste beyond the taste of skin, only warmth and the sensation of it sliding down into him. Hannibal said his name, softly, and it hardly made it through the buzzing in Will's ears.

Then he withdrew, leaving Will to pitch forward against his thighs, face pressed to cotton and wool and the small bit of exposed thigh. He clung tight with one hand, burrowing, hiding his face from what he'd seen. He worked himself tightly, his fingers slick with his own fluid, as Hannibal raked his fingers down over Will's scalp, to the back of neck. He pulled Will in tightly then, hooking his palm around his neck, so close that Will's breath was shuttered between them with almost no room to escape. Will was in deep water, and wanted to go even deeper, to suffocate and drown, to learn to breathe under water and be reborn.

“Open the door, Will,” Hannibal said. His voice was rough, and his words half swallowed by his thickened accent. “Only you can open the door to life, and to your own power. You hold it inside yourself now. Doesn't it feel good?”

It was true. He held Hannibal inside him, in his throat and belly, and it was good, and he felt stronger than he had for years, or maybe forever. He came with a sob, face mashed into Hannibal's body.

He stayed hard in his own palm for more than a minute, his mind shivering with revelation, shaking. Slowly, clarity came to him, perhaps some interaction between the adrenaline and the drug. He saw himself and Hannibal as if from outside, and they were posed like a tableau in a medieval painting: a saint receiving the supplication of a sinner. Healing him.

“I can't believe you've *ever* done this as therapy before,” he said, looking up. It wasn't what he wanted to say, but those things he didn't think he could articulate. His jaw ached, and it was a struggle to get the words out coherently. “This isn't what psychiatrists usually do with their patients, by an extremely long margin.”

Hannibal was looking down at him. He had slid his mask back into place already, and Will was grateful for that. He began to feel calmer. Hannibal's fingers slid up into Will's hair, stroking delicately as if Will were made of some material that might break if he pushed too hard. Will breathed, aware of the change in his mouth and throat, aware of sore tissue and



inflamed sinuses, the sting of saliva and semen. Hannibal's cock, softened now, hung free of his pants only inches from Will's lips, and it was still damp from his mouth. An instrument of life.

"I haven't," Hannibal said. "I admit... it was very much spur of the moment. Sometimes the patient guides the treatment."

"Is it over?" Will said.

"Do you want it to be over?"

Will sat back, groaning at the stiffness in his knees. The carpet was soft, and the room was warm, and the floor was solid under him. Thick lethargy stole over him. "I don't know. Wrong time to ask me that question."

He fell back and closed his eyes, and sensed the shadows shifting above him. Colours flared behind his eyelids. It was hard to collect his memories of what had just happened; they skittered about like leaves in the wind. He chased the vision of Hannibal in the moonlight forest until it faded, gone like mist.

"Will. Will? Are you awake?"

He opened his eyes to see Hannibal above him, holding a thick blanket. He'd taken off his waistcoat and shoes. He looked immaculate though, somehow, even in his disarray. "Stay," Will said, and shot out a hand. It connected with Hannibal's shin, and he pulled until Hannibal was on the carpet next to him.

"Where else would I go? It's my house," Hannibal said, with no smile, but with a softness around his eyes that Will liked to see. He pulled the blanket over both of them, and Will pushed into his body space, like one of his own dogs seeking comfort and warmth. After a moment, Hannibal slid his arms around him, cradling him close.

"How are you feeling?" he asked, and Will was certain he didn't imagine the soft dry touch of lips to his ear, and then again to his temple.

"Like I just got fucked in the head." He smiled at the noise of disdain that Hannibal made. "But I'm curious. What did you get out of this? You can't want this sort of complication."

"Why do you call it a complication? Perhaps for me this simplifies matters between us. And perhaps we'll both have forgotten about it in the morning. Psilocybin can cause memory disruption."

Hannibal radiated heat, and Will pushed closer. Each place where their bodies touched, he imagined they were fusing together, veins joining and blood mixing. "I'm still high," he noted. "You know how I can tell?"

"Do explain."

"Everything seems so clear. Life makes sense. I make sense."

“A sensation that is all too easy to lose,” Hannibal said. He tightened his arms around Will.  
“The next day.”

## End Notes

Thank you to Emungere for the beta and encouragement. The title is from Blake's poem 'A Dream'.

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