

DR. LECTER'S CELL

is coming slowly INTO VIEW... Behind its barred front wall is a second barrier of stout nylon net... Sparse, bolted-down furniture, many softcover books and papers. On the walls, extraordinarily detailed, skillful drawings, mostly European cityscapes, in charcoal or crayon.

Clarice stops, at a police distance from his bars, clears her throat.

CLARICE

Dr. Lecter... My name is Clarice Starling. May I talk with you?

Dr. Hannibal Lecter is lounging on his bunk, in white pajamas, reading an Italian Vogue. He turns, considers her... A face so long out of the sun, it seems almost leached - except for the glittering eyes, and the wet red mouth. He rises smoothly, crossing to stand before her; the gracious host. His voice is cultured, soft.

DR. LECTER

Good morning.

CUTTING BETWEEN THEM

as Clarice comes a measured distance closer.

CLARICE

Doctor, we have a hard problem in psychological profiling. I want to ask for your help with a questionnaire.

DR. LECTER

"We" being the Behavioral Science Unit, at Quantico. You're one of Jack Crawford's, I expect.

CLARICE

I am, yes.

DR. LECTER

May I see your credentials?

Clarice is surprised, but fishes her ID card from her bag, holds it up for his inspection. He smiles, soothingly.

DR. LECTER

(continuing)

Closer, please... clo-ser...

She complies each time, trying to hide her fear. Dr. Lecter's nostrils lift, as he gently, like an animal, tests the air. Then he smiles, glancing at her card.

DR. LECTER

(continuing)

That expires in one week. You're not real FBI, are you?

CLARICE

I'm - still in training at the Academy.

DR. LECTER

Jack Crawford sent a trainee to me?

CLARICE

We're talking about psychology, Doctor, not the Bureau. Can you decide for yourself whether or not I'm qualified?

DR. LECTER

Mmmmm... That's rather slippery of you, Officer Starling. Sit. Please.

She sits in the folding metal desk-chair. He waits politely till she's settled, then sits down himself, faces her happily.

DR. LECTER

(continuing)

Now then. What did Miggs say to you?

(she is puzzled)

"Multiple Miggs," in the next cell. He hissed at you. What did he say?

CLARICE

He said - "I can smell your cunt."

DR. LECTER

I see. I myself cannot. You use Evyan skin cream, and sometimes you wear L'Air du Temps, but not today. You brought your best bag, though, didn't you?

CLARICE

(beat)

Yes.

DR. LECTER

It's much better than your shoes.

CLARICE
Maybe they'll catch up.

DR. LECTER
I have no doubt of it.

CLARICE
(shifting
uncomfortably)
Did you do those drawings, Doctor?

DR. LECTER
Yes. That's the Duomo, seen from the
Belvedere. Do you know Florence?

CLARICE
All that detail, just from memory...?

DR. LECTER
Memory, Officer Starling, is what I
have instead of view.

A pause, then Clarice takes the questionnaire from her
case.

CLARICE
Dr. Lecter, if you'd please consider -

DR. LECTER
No, no, no. You were doing fine, you'd
been courteous and receptive to
courtesy, you'd established trust with
the embarrassing truth about Miggs,
and now this ham-handed segue into
your questionnaire. It won't do. It's
stupid and boring.

CLARICE
I'm only asking you to look at this,
Doctor. Either you will or you won't.

DR. LECTER
Jack Crawford must be very busy indeed
if he's recruiting help from the
student body. Busy hunting that new
one, Buffalo Bill... Such a naughty
boy! Did Crawford send you to ask for
my advice on him?

CLARICE
No, I came because we need -

DR. LECTER

How many women has he used, our Bill?

CLARICE

Five... so far.

DR. LECTER

All flayed...?

CLARICE

Partially, yes. But Doctor, that's an active case, I'm not involved. If -

DR. LECTER

Do you know why he's called Buffalo Bill? Tell me. The newspapers won't say.

CLARICE

I'll tell you if you'll look at this form.

(he considers, then
nods)

It started as a bad joke in Kansas City Homicide. They said... this one likes to skin his humps.

DR. LECTER

Witless and misleading. Why do you think he takes their skins, Officer Starling? Thrill me with your wisdom.

CLARICE

It excites him. Most serial killers keep some sort of trophies.

DR. LECTER

I didn't.

CLARICE

No. You ate yours.

A tense beat, then a smile from him, at this small boldness.

DR. LECTER

Send that through.

She rolls him the questionnaire, in his sliding food tray. He rises, glances at it, turning a page or two disdainfully.

DR. LECTER

(continuing)

Oh, Officer Starling... do you think you can dissect me with this blunt little tool?

CLARICE

No. I only hoped that your knowledge -

Suddenly he whips the tray back at her, with a metallic CLANG that makes her start. His voice remains a pleasant purr.

DR. LECTER

You're sooo ambitious, aren't you...? You know what you look like to me, with your good bag and your cheap shoes? You look like a rube. A well-scrubbed, hustling rube with a little taste... Good nutrition has given you some length of bone, but you're not more than one generation from poor white trash, are you Officer Starling...? That accent you're trying so desperately to shed - pure West Virginia. What was your father, dear? Was he a coal miner? Did he stink of the lamp...? And oh, how quickly the boys found you! All those tedious, sticky fumblings, in the back seats of cars, while you could only dream of getting out. Getting anywhere -yes? Getting all the way - to the F...B...I.

His every word has struck her like a tiny, precise dart. But she squares her jaw and won't give ground.

CLARICE

You see a lot, Dr. Lecter. But are you strong enough to point that high-powered perception at yourself? How about it...? Look at yourself and write down the truth.

(she slams the tray
back at him)

Or maybe you're afraid to.

DR. LECTER

You're a tough one, aren't you?

CLARICE

Reasonably so. Yes.