

SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

INSIDE THE CAGE

a cot and a small table, each bolted to the floor, and a flimsy paper screen, hiding a toilet. Dr. Lecter sits at the table, his back to her, studying the Buffalo Bill case file. He now wears a green prison jumpsuit. A small cassette player is chained to the steel table.

DR. LECTER
(without turning)
Good evening, Clarice.

She stops at a striped police barricade, before his bars.

CLARICE
I thought you might want your drawings back... Just until you get your view.

DR. LECTER
How very thoughtful... Or did Crawford send you here for one last wheedle - before you're both booted off the case?

CLARICE
Nobody sent me. I came on my own.

He spins in his swivel chair, stops neatly. A coy smile.

DR. LECTER
People will say we're in love. Anthrax Island. That was an especially nice touch. Yours?

CLARICE
Yes.

DR. LECTER
Pity about poor Catherine though. Tick-tock...

He spins again in his chair, playfully.

MOVING ANGLE - FAVORING CLARICE

as she circles the cage, trying to keep his face in sight.

CLARICE
Your anagrams are showing Doctor. Louis Friend? Ire Sol Fiund. Also known as Fool's Gold.

DR. LECTER
Oh Clarice, your problem is you need to get more fun out of life.

CLARICE
I think you were telling me the truth in Baltimore - or starting to. Tell me the rest now.

DR. LECTER

I've studied the case file, have you...? Everything you need to find him is right in these pages. Whatever his name is.

CLARICE

Then tell me how.

DR. LECTER

First principles, Clarice. Simplicity. Read Marcus Aurelius. Of each particular thing, ask: What is it, in itself, what is its nature...? What does he do, this man you seek?

CLARICE

He kills w-

DR. LECTER

(sharply, as he stops)

No! That's incidental.

CLOSE ANGLE - TWO SHOT as he rises, pained by her ignorance, and crosses to the bars.

DR. LECTER

What is the first and principal thing he does, what need does he serve by killing?

CLARICE

Anger, social resentment, sexual frus-

DR. LECTER

No, he covets. That's his nature. And how do we begin to covet, Clarice? Do we seek out things to covet? Make an effort to answer.

CLARICE

No. We just -

DR. LECTER

No. Precisely. We begin by coveting what we see every day. Don't you feel eyes moving over your body, Clarice? I hardly see how you couldn't. And don't your eyes move over the things you want?

CLARICE

All right, then tell me how -

DR. LECTER

No. It's your turn to tell me, Clarice. You don't have any more vacations to sell, on Anthrax Island. Why did you run away from that ranch?

CLARICE

Dr. Lecter, when there's time I'll -

DR. LECTER

We don't reckon time the same way, Clarice. This is all the time you'll ever have.

CLARICE

Later, listen, I'll -

DR. LECTER

I'll listen now. After your father's murder, you were orphaned. You were ten years old. You went to live with cousins, on a sheep and horse ranch in Montana. And - ?

CLARICE

And - one morning I just - ran away...

She turns from him. He presses closer, gripping the bars.

DR. LECTER

Not "just," Clarice. What set you off? You started what time?

CLARICE

Early. Still dark.

DR. LECTER

Then something woke you. What? Did you dream...? What was it?

IN FLASHBACK

The 10-year old Clarice sits up abruptly in her bed, frightened. She is in a Montana ranch house; it almost dawn. Strange, fearful shadows on her ceiling and walls... a window, partly fogged by the cold; eerie brightness outside.

CLARICE (V.O.)

I heard a strange sound...

DR. LECTER (V.O.)

What was it?

THE CHILD RISES

crosses to the window in her nightgown, rubs the glass.

CLARICE (V.O.)

I didn't know. I went to look...

HIGH ANGLES (2ND STORY) - THE CHILD'S POV

Shadowy men, ranch hands, are moving in and out of a nearby barn, carrying mysterious bundles. The mens' breath is steaming... A refrigerated truck idles nearby, its engine adding more steam. A strange, almost surrealistic scene...

CLARICE (V.O.)
Screaming! Some kind of - screaming.
Like a child's voice...

THE LITTLE GIRL

is terrified; she covers her ears.

DR. LECTER (V.O.)
What did you do?

CLARICE (V.O.)
Got dressed without turning on the
light. I went downstairs... outside...

THE LITTLE GIRL

in her winter coat, slips noiselessly towards the open barn door. She ducks into the shadows to avoid a ranch hand, who passes her with a squirming bundle of some kind. He goes into the barn, and she edges after him reluctantly.

CLARICE (V.O.)
I crept up to the barn... I was so
scared to look inside - but I had
to...

THE LITTLE GIRL'S POV

as the open doorway LOOMS CLOSER... Bright lights inside,
straw bales, the edges of stalls, then moving figures...

DR. LECTER (V.O.)
And what did you see, Clarice?

A SQUIRMING LAMB

is held down on a table by two ranch hands.

CLARICE (V.O.)
Lambs. The lambs were screaming...

A third cowboy stretches out the lamb's neck, raises a bloody knife. Just as he's about to slice its throat -

BACK TO THE ADULT CLARICE

staring into the distance, shaken, still trembling from the child's shock. We see Dr. Lecter, over her shoulder, studying her intently.

DR. LECTER
They were slaughtering the spring
lambs?

CLARICE
Yes...! They were screaming.

DR. LECTER
So you ran away...

CLARICE

No. First I tried to free them... I opened the gate of their pen - but they wouldn't run. They just stood there, confused. They wouldn't run...

DR. LECTER

But you could. You did.

CLARICE

I took one lamb. And I ran away, as fast as I could...

IN FLASHBACK

a vast Montana plain, and crossing this, a tiny figure - the little Clarice, holding a lamb in her arms.

DR. LECTER (V.O.)

Where were you going?

CLARICE (V.O.)

I don't know. I had no food or water. It was very cold. I thought - if I can even save just one... but he got so heavy. So heavy...

The tiny figure stops, and after a few moments sinks to the ground, hunched over in despair.

CLARICE (V.O.)

I didn't get more than a few miles before the sheriff's car found me. The rancher was so angry he sent me to live at the Lutheran orphanage in Bozeman. I never saw the ranch again...

DR. LECTER (V.O.)

But what became of your lamb?

CLARICE

They killed him.

BACK TO SCENE

as the adult Clarice turns, staring into his feverish eyes. She shakes her head, unwilling - or unable - to say more.

DR. LECTER

You still wake up sometimes, don't you? Wake up in the dark, with the lambs screaming?

CLARICE

Yes...

DR. LECTER

Do you think if you saved Catherine, you could make them stop...? Do you think, if Catherine lives, you won't wake up in the dark, ever again, to the screaming of the lambs? Do you...?

CLARICE

Yes! I don't know...! I don't know.

DR. LECTER

(a pause; then, oddly
at peace)

Thank you, Clarice.

CLARICE

(a whisper)

Tell me his name, Dr. Lecter.

DR. LECTER

Brave Clarice. Will you let me know
if ever the lambs stop screaming?

CLARICE

(moving closer to the
bars)

Tell me his name.

DR. LECTER

Take your case file. I
won't be needing it anymore.

He holds out the file, arm extended between the bars. She
hesitates, then reaches to take it.

VERY CLOSE ANGLE - SLOW MOTION

as the exchange is made, his index finger touches her hand,
and lingers there, just for a moment.

DR. LECTER'S EYES

widen, crackling at this touch, like sparks in a cave.

DR. LECTER

Good-bye, Clarice.

CLARICE

hugging the case file to her chest, stares back at him as
the men crowd in on her, pushing her away.

HER POV - MOVING

as Dr. Lecter, head cocked in a smile, slowly recedes...

DISSOLVE TO: