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Sommario/riassunto	The Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane is a fictional psychiatric institution. It is where Dr. Hannibal Lecter, the main character in a series of suspense novels by Thomas Harris, has been incarcerated for a very long time. Dr. Lecter is highly intelligent, erudite, and intellectual, but at the same time devoid of empathy and afflicted with a macabre abnormality in that, in terms of his preferred diet, he is partial to human flesh. Hence, he has acquired the nickname Hannibal the Cannibal. Hannibal Lecter is without doubt one of the most notorious serial killers in Western popular culture. For years, he has been locked up in the deepest, darkest cellar in this establishment, where he receives visits only from mice, rats, and a stoic guard who comes to bring him food. His cell, at the end of the corridor, is small, four by four meters, with three stone walls, no window, and a wall of bars on the fourth side. How does Hannibal cope with this situation? How does he manage to counteract total madness and deal with the isolation? He uses a well-known cognitive technique: he closes his eyes for a few hours a day and enters the palace of his imagination. This palace is imaginary but constructed in great detail. It is strikingly large,

made up of countless rooms, corridors, and halls, with windows opening up views onto all the places that are important to Hannibal. The walls are adorned with frescos depicting his own memories, fantasies, and dreams for the future – all these scenes have their own place in the palace of his imagination and are retrievable down to the smallest detail.

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