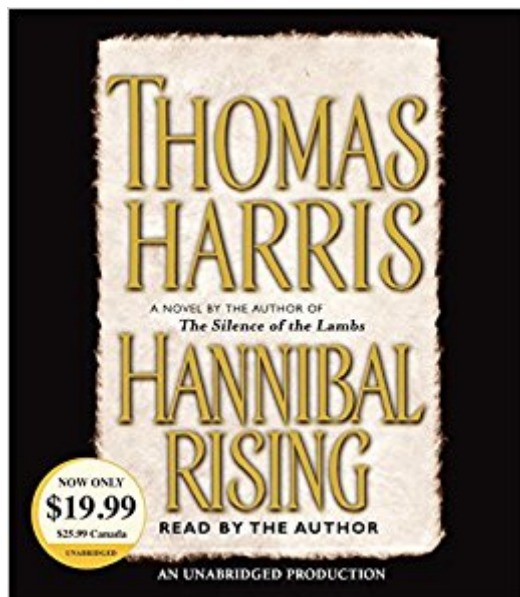


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Hannibal Rising



Synopsis

HE IS ONE OF THE MOST HAUNTING CHARACTERS IN ALL OF LITERATURE. AT LAST THE EVOLUTION OF HIS EVIL IS REVEALED. Hannibal Lecter emerges from the nightmare of the Eastern Front, a boy in the snow, mute, with a chain around his neck. He seems utterly alone, but he has brought his demons with him. Hannibal's uncle, a noted painter, finds him in a Soviet orphanage and brings him to France, where Hannibal will live with his uncle and his uncle's beautiful and exotic wife, Lady Murasaki. Lady Murasaki helps Hannibal to heal. With her help he flourishes, becoming the youngest person ever admitted to medical school in France. But Hannibal's demons visit him and torment him. When he is old enough, he visits them in turn. He discovers he has gifts beyond the academic, and in that epiphany, Hannibal Lecter becomes death's prodigy.

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Customer Reviews

Discover the origins of one of the most feared villains of all time in Thomas Harris's *Hannibal Rising*, a novel that promises to reveal the "evolution of Hannibal Lecter's evil." Thomas Harris first introduced readers to Hannibal Lecter in *Red Dragon*, a tale wrapped around FBI agent Will Graham (the man who hunted Lecter down) and his ability to "get inside the mind of the killer." Graham consults Dr. Lecter (the man who nearly killed him) on the case, and the legend of the nefarious Dr. Lecter was born. Harris's masterful and mesmerizing follow up, *The Silence of the Lambs* wowed fans, but it was Jonathan Demme's terrifying, Oscar-winning (Best Actor, Actress, Director, Picture and Adapted Screenplay) film, and Anthony Hopkins's extraordinary (and arguably

over the top) performance that made "Hannibal the Cannibal" a household name. Hannibal, the third book in the Lecter saga made Lecter the prey and seemingly wrapped up the tale of the cannibalistic psychiatrist, but never revealed the source of the doctor's...gifts. Fans have been waiting decades to find out how the good doctor became "death's prodigy," making *Hannibal Rising* one of the most anticipated books of 2006 (and movies of 2007). --Daphne Durham

Hannibal Rising: An Excerpt

Prologue The door to Dr. Hannibal Lecter's memory palace is in the darkness at the center of his mind and it has a latch that can be found by touch alone. This curious portal opens on immense and well-lit spaces, early baroque, and corridors and chambers rivaling in number those of the Topkapi Museum. Everywhere there are exhibits, well-spaced and lighted, each keyed to memories that lead to other memories in geometric progression. Spaces devoted to Hannibal Lecter's earliest years differ from the other archives in being incomplete. Some are static scenes, fragmentary, like painted Attic shards held together by blank plaster. Other rooms hold sound and motion, great snakes wrestling and heaving in the dark and lit in flashes. Pleas and screaming fill some places on the grounds where Hannibal himself cannot go. But the corridors do not echo screaming, and there is music if you like. The palace is a construction begun early in Hannibal's student life. In his years of confinement he improved and enlarged his palace, and its riches sustained him for long periods while warders denied him his books. Here in the hot darkness of his mind, let us feel together for the latch. Finding it, let us elect for music in the corridors and, looking neither left nor right, go to the Hall of the Beginning where the displays are most fragmentary. We will add to them what we have learned elsewhere, in war records and police records, from interviews and forensics and the mute postures of the dead. Robert Lecter's letters, recently unearthed, may help us establish the vital statistics of Hannibal, who altered dates freely to confound the authorities and his chroniclers. By our efforts we may watch as the beast within turns from the teat and, working upwind, enters the world.

Chapter 6 Lothar heard it first as he drew water, the roar of an engine in low gear and cracking of branches. He left the bucket on the well and in his haste he came into the lodge without wiping his feet. A Soviet tank, a T-34 in winter camouflage of snow and straw, crashed up the horse trail and into the clearing. Painted on the turret in Russian were AVENGE OUR SOVIET GIRLS and WIPE OUT THE FASCIST VERMIN. Two soldiers in white rode on the back over the radiators. The turret swiveled to point the tank's cannon at the house. A hatch opened and a gunner in hooded winter white stood behind a machine gun. The tank commander stood in the other hatch with a megaphone. He repeated his message in Russian and in German, barking over the diesel clatter of the tank engine. "We want water, we will not harm you or take your food unless a shot comes from the house. If we are fired on, every one of

you will die. Now come outside. Gunner, lock and load. If you do not see faces by the count of ten, fire." A loud clack as the machine gun's bolt went back. Count Lecter stepped outside, standing straight in the sunshine, his hands visible. "Take the water. We are no harm to you." The tank commander put his megaphone aside. "Everyone outside where I can see you." The count and the tank commander looked at each other for a long moment. The tank commander showed his palms. The count showed his palms. The count turned to the house. "Come." When the commander saw the family he said, "The children can stay inside where it's warm." And to his gunner and crew, "Cover them. Watch the upstairs windows. Start the pump. You can smoke." The machine gunner pushed up his goggles and lit a cigarette. He was no more than a boy, the skin of his face paler around his eyes. He saw Mischa peeping around the door facing and smiled at her. Among the fuel and water drums lashed to the tank was a small petrol-powered pump with a rope starter. The tank driver snaked a hose with a screen filter down the well and after many pulls on the rope the pump clattered, squealed, and primed itself. The noise covered the scream of the Stuka dive bomber until it was almost on them, the tank's gunner swiveling his muzzle around, cranking hard to elevate his gun, firing as the airplane's winking cannon stitched the ground. Rounds screamed off the tank, the gunner hit, still firing with his remaining arm. The Stuka's windscreen starred with fractures, the pilot's goggles filled with blood and the dive bomber, still carrying one of its eggs, hit treetops, plowed into the garden and its fuel exploded, cannon under the wings still firing after the impact. Hannibal, on the floor of the lodge, Mischa partly under him, saw his mother lying in the yard, bloody and her dress on fire. "Stay here!" to Mischa and he ran to his mother, ammunition in the airplane cooking off now, slow and then faster, casings flying backward striking the snow, flames licking around the remaining bomb beneath the wing. The pilot sat in the cockpit, dead, his face burned to a death's head in flaming scarf and helmet, his gunner dead behind him. Lothar alone survived in the yard and he raised a bloody arm to the boy. Then Mischa ran to her mother, out into the yard and Lothar tried to reach her and pull her down as she passed, but a cannon round from the flaming plane slammed through him, blood spattering the baby and Mischa raised her arms and screamed into the sky. Hannibal heaped snow onto the fire in his mother's clothes, stood up and ran to Mischa amid the random shots and carried her into the lodge, into the cellar. The shots outside slowed and stopped as bullets melted in the breeches of the cannon. The sky darkened and snow came again, hissing on the hot metal. Darkness, and snow again. Hannibal among the corpses, how much later he did not know, snow drifting down to dust his mother's eyelashes and her hair. She was the only corpse not blackened and crisped. Hannibal tugged at her, but her body was frozen to the ground. He pressed his face against her. Her bosom was frozen hard, her heart silent. He put a napkin over

her face and piled snow on her. Dark shapes moved at the edge of the woods. His torch reflected on wolves' eyes. He shouted at them and waved a shovel. Mischa was determined to come out to her mother—he had to choose. He took Mischa back inside and left the dead to the dark. Mr. Jakov's book was undamaged beside his blackened hand until a wolf ate the leather cover and amid the scattered pages of Huyghens' Treatise on Light licked Mr. Jakov's brains off the snow. Hannibal and Mischa heard snuffling and growling outside. Hannibal built up the fire. To cover the noise he tried to get Mischa to sing; he sang to her. She clutched his coat in her fists. "Ein Mannlein . . ." Snowflakes on the windows. In the corner of a pane, a dark circle appeared, made by the tip of a glove. In the dark circle a pale blue eye. Excerpted from HANNIBAL RISING by Thomas Harris
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Twenty-five years after Hannibal Lecter, a cross between Professor Moriarty and Jack the Ripper, first invaded the imaginations of countless readers worldwide in Red Dragon, bestseller Harris has crafted an unmemorable prequel that's intended to explain the origins of Lecter's evil. Fans of Harris's previous Lecter novel, Hannibal (1999), already know the major trauma that transformed the young Lecter-the murder of his beloved younger sister, Mischa, during WWII-which the author describes in more grisly detail. Lecter also has an unusual love interest, his uncle's Japanese wife, Lady Murasaki, but the bulk of the narrative focuses on Lecter's quest for revenge on those he holds responsible for Mischa's death. Unfortunately, the prose and plotting lack the suspenseful power of Red Dragon or The Silence of the Lambs, and will leave many feeling that with such a masterful monster as Lecter, less is more. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

While not as satisfying as Red Dragon, Silence of the Lambs, or (to a lesser extent) Hannibal, Thomas Harris manages to cook up a decadent appetizer to an already loaded three-course meal. It's hard not to see Hannibal Rising as a last-ditch effort to revive an ailing franchise by further developing one of the most complex characters of modern fiction. By offering a traumatic origin story as explanation for how a human being could become Dr. Lecter, Harris walks a dangerous tightrope in making his magnificent creation a less-fascinating avatar of evil. What this novel gives readers is a sumptuous look at Hannibal's youth, the plot of which is not much more than a thrilling

story of grisly vengeance. A young Lithuanian aristocrat loses his parents and darling sister, Mischa, in the final desperate days of World War II. Hannibal is forced to watch as little Mischa is devoured by callous Nazi-sympathizing ruffians whom Hannibal later tracks down and gruesomely dispatches in the natural course of the novel. By the end of *Hannibal Rising*, the reader is left with a better understanding of the epicurean psychiatrist, even if the book doesn't exactly conclude with the satisfaction one would wish from an examination of Lecter's tenebrous beginnings. The action is swift and often fleeting, and the chapters brief (often only four pages), and the sentences are, for the most part, simplistic and lacking the eloquence found in Harris's preceding works. The dialogue is occasionally stilted and the character of Lady Murasaki, who sensually introduces the impressionable teenage Hannibal to a rarified world of Japanese art and poetry, exists only to be beautiful. Thankfully, Hannibal Lecter remains a preeminent literary icon, a dominant fictional boogeyman, and that's primarily due to Anthony Hopkins's unforgettable screen incarnation. *Hannibal Rising* reads like the novelization of a screenplay; not surprisingly Thomas Harris wrote the screenplay in the course of writing this novel. That isn't to say the book is a complete loss, for even after so many years since writing *Red Dragon* and *Silence*, Harris still possesses a keen aptitude for depicting the animal nature that lurks beneath mankind's veneer of civilization.

I read this book immediately after *Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal*, so the character of Hannibal Lecter was fresh in my mind. Compared to the first three (including *Red Dragon*, which I read last year), this book is much different. *Red Dragon* and *Silence* are tight police procedurals in which an FBI employee (Will Graham and Clarice Starling, respectively) goes on the hunt for a serial killer consulting with the captured Dr. Hannibal Lecter, whose character increases importance and "screen time" as we move through the series. *Hannibal* (book 3) puts Dr. Lecter in more of a hero's role, being hunted several years after his escape from captivity. *Hannibal Rising* has almost none of the procedural elements of the first three books but instead allows a glimpse into how a character like Hannibal Lecter could be molded (based on the atrocities he witnessed and was victimized by during WWII). If you liked the character of Hannibal Lecter from the first three books, this book is worth checking out in my opinion. You don't get some of the biting insight that Hannibal displays in the earlier novels, which I found to be the most interesting scenes, but I was never bored. Some critics have said Harris only wrote this to cash in on the movie which was going to be made with or without his participation, but I would disagree. I think this novel shows an empathy to the character of Hannibal Lecter, who, in my opinion, was made into the monster you come to know in the later works rather than born as one. Thomas Harris could be accused of leaning on a well known (and

fascinating character) to push the series further, but he gained plenty of good favor in books 1-3 so I'm certainly not complaining.

I quite liked this book. It was interesting to see a compassionate Hannibal, the source of his "craft." I can understand why some didn't cotton to this "prequel," but I think they never understood in the first place.

This novel is an intriguing look into the backstory of the person who will be known as "Hannibal the Cannibal"! After completing the book, it's no wonder why the genius that will be a medical student (& eventually Psychiatrist) turned out the way he did. Being a child of privilege & raised with his sister in a castle as the Nazi's start their sweep of conquest through Europe. The Lectre family flees to a hunting lodge for several years before being discovered as the Nazi regime is nearing its end. This is where the first of several family members, a personal tutor & servants meet their untimely ends; & where events only get worse for Hannibal & his surviving sister. Once you start reading, it's very hard to put down!

Thomas Harris is a fantastic writer. By the time you finished reading his books? You completely understand the motivation of every character he's written. You feel like you know them personally. These are great books. Well written. Not for children. They are descriptive, sexual, violence, and psychologically thrilling. Definitely a good read. They're not difficult to read. But they're interesting and in-depth into the psyche of your characters.

I guess some of Harris' books should be read in order. Hannibal Rising sets the stage for what comes later - as far as the Hannibal character goes. Harris pens a well-plotted, richly-detailed storyline that captures the reader from page one. He takes you through the story while keeping you on edge about where the story will take you. If you haven't read any of Harris' books having the character, Hannibal Lecter, this is where you start. This book is where Hannibal begins his twisted, perverse life. A page-turner as good as it gets from Thomas Harris!

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