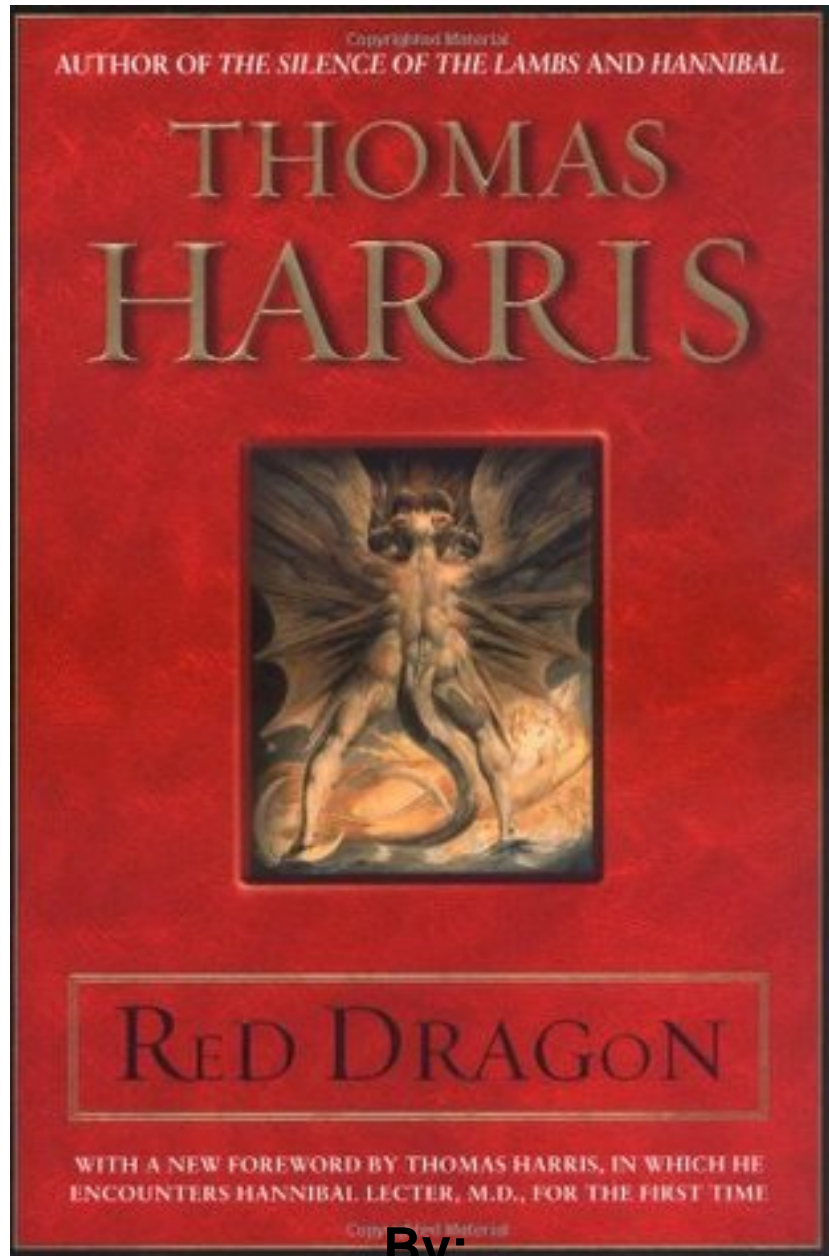


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By:
Thomas Harris

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What people Say:

Kemper

When it comes to Hannibal Lecter, I'm like one of those music hipster douche bags that everyone hates because I snootily declare that I knew about him long before most people did and that he's sucked ever since he got really famous.

I'd read this years before the book of

came out and led to the excellent film adaptation that skyrocketed Hannibal to the top of pop culture villains. Hell, I'm so Hannibal-hip that I'd caught Brian Cox playing him in Michael Mann's adapta

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, and I didn't just see it on VHS like all the other late-comers, I actually saw it in the theater. Twice! (I'm pretty sure this is the literary equivalent of claiming to have seen a band in a bar with eleven other people long before their first record deal.)

So after Thomas Harris and Hollywood ran the character into the ground after the second movie, it's been years of shaking my head and saying, "Man, nothing's been the same since Anthony Hopkins gave his Oscar acceptance speech."

Since I felt like Harris was just cashing in and had pretty much ruined Hannibal in the process, I hadn't felt the urge to revisit

or

Ana

Enjoyed it even more the second time!

Let me break this down for you really quickly.

Francis Dolarhyde goes a little cray-cray and thinks he is becoming the Red Dragon. Basically, he is going to take what is his with fire and blood. Err, somethin

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Will Graham is emo asf.

Dr Lecter is just trolling everyone at this point.

Karla

Since I've become a fan of the TV show

, I thought it was appropo to re-read the book that inspired it. It's been years, and I'd forgotten practically everything about both the book and the Edward Norton/Ralph Fiennes movie. Even so, it wasn't like I was reading it fresh. Hannibal Lecter's become such a part of the pop culture that I had expectations, also intensified by the fact that

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Comparing the show

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Comparing the show to the novel was a lot of fun, because you can see the pieces that have been lifted, altered and paid homage to by Bryan Fuller & Co. Bits of dialogue, minor characters, etc. It's very much like fanfiction, probably one of the best examples I can name of something that has the "inspired by/adapted from/based on" label.

Whereas the show focuses heavily on Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter, their intricate personalities and evolving (or devolving) relationship, the book's emphasis is on the serial killer, especially in the latter half. Lecter only has a couple scenes, and Graham wasn't nearly as interesting as how Hugh Dancy portrays him.

I didn't get the same amount of happy happies from his snarky charm.

Stephanie

Now that I've just finished reading this book, I feel the need to scrub parts of my brain with steel wool for the purpose of removing certain scenes that Thomas Harris has so rudely embedded there. Thanks a bunch Tom!

Will Graham has the rotten luck at being really good at his job. He is a profiler for the FBI and while he was on the job catching Dr. Hannibal Lecter, Lecter caught him with a big sharp knife. Will decides that was enough for him, so he makes the wise decision to retire.

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But nooo! Jack Crawford, Will's former boss, shows up at his house asking for help on a new case of a new serial killer dubbed the Tooth Fairy, because the creep likes to bite his victims.

Here's how the conversation goes between the two, broken down to its simplest form.

Jack: Hey I need your help with a case because you're the best at what you do.

Will: But I don't want to on account I was nearly gutted last time I helped you.

Jack: But you're really good at your job.

Brad

Is it heresy to say that I liked both film versions better than I liked the book? Probably, but it's true.

Thomas Harris isn't the finest writer in the world, and I think even he'd acknowledge that, but he is full of great ideas, and

is absolutely one of his best.

I think the mark of how great his ideas are is that they almost always make a compelling transfer to the screen, and Red Dragon has made that transition twice: once as Michael Mann's Manhunter and once as the more faithful

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I think the mark of how great his ideas are is that they almost always make a compelling transfer to the screen, and Red Dragon has made that transition twice: once as Michael Mann's Manhunter and once as the more faithful

. Each film provides a different take on Harris' most famous character, Hannibal Lecter, both films provide a chilling effect on the viewer's emotions, and both films offer up a frightening -- though very different -- Francis Dolarhyde.

Harris' writing is cinematic in structure and quality, making his books easy to transfer to the screen. Characters, settings and even action can be dropped or rolled into others or completely altered without harming the telling of the tale. Much of this is about the mood Harris creates. There is an underlying suspense and oppression in his books that gives a screen writer or director a sound compass for adaptation, allowing him/her to do justice to a Harris book by maintaining the spirit of the story -- no matter what changes are required by the shift to cinema.