Biography of Thomas Harris

Thomas Harris was born in Tennessee in 1940, but moved to Rich, Mississippi, with his parents, William and Polly, early in his life. He attended Calrsdale High School, where his mother taught biology. His mother reports that he spent most of his time reading and writing, and that Hemmingway was a favorite writer. Not much information is available about the life of Harris, but after high school, he went to Baylor University in Waco, Texas, to earn a major in English and graduated in 1964. While in Waco he worked for the Herald Tribune as a police reporter but found it very unimaginative. While at Baylor, he wrote numerous stories to magazines like True and Argosy that were gothic and detailed. During this time Harris met his wife, Harriet and they had a daughter named Anne before they divorced in the 60’s. His father died during this period of his life as well. After college Harris moved to New York and held a job as editor for the Associated Press in New York until 1974.

His experiences as a crime reporter gave him information he used in his later writings. His first book, Black Sunday, is about Arab terrorist and a Vietnam veteran who try to bomb the Super Bowl. Published in 1975, the book became a best seller and a succesfull movie. Harris does a lot of research for his fiction, so his second book Red Dragon was not published until 1981. This novel is the story of an FBI agent’s search for a serial killer and contains Harri’s character psychotid psychiatrist Hannibal “The Cannibal” Lecter. Red Dragon also became a popular movie called Manhunter.
The third novel written by Harris is considered a masterpiece of suspense by many people. The Silence of the Lambs was published in 1988 and includes madmen and a string-willed female. The film made from the book won five Academy Awards. Harris has homes in Rich, Mississippi; Long Island, New York; and Miami, Florida. His mother, with whom he keeps in close contact, says she likes his work and she is not frightened by it! Harris closely guards his privacy. Thomas Harris is known for his painstaking detail in his writing. The detail is so vivid that the story almost seems to make pictures in the mind of the reader. Because of his attention to detail, Harris takes a long time to write his novels. His most recently published novel is Hannibal, published in the summer of 1999.

His literary works

Thomas Harris’s literary works may chronologically be listed as follow:

1.  Black Sunday (1975)
Summary of The Novel

This story was taken place in Lithuanian countryside in 1944. Hannibal Lecter as the leading character was eight years old and he lived with his family in Lecter castle built by Hannibal the Grim, his paternal ancestor. He, his parents, and his younger sister, Mischa lived there as noblemen with great role in the society. Hannibal was blessed with a genius mind so his father, Count Lecter hired a Jewish teacher named Mr. Jakov. He had showed his good intelligence since he was young. When he was two years old, he could read book from Brother Grimm which was illustrated with woodcuts where everyone had pointed nails. He read many dictionaries such English, German, and the twenty three volumes of the Lithuanian dictionary so he mastered many different languages. He also mastered psychic when he was a little boy because he could determine the height of the Lecter castle towers by the length of their shadows by following the instruction of book entitled *Elements*.

Everything was changed in 1944 when Lecter, his younger sister, Mischa, and his parents escaped to the family’s hunting lodge in the woods on the second day of Operation Barbarossa when Hitler swept across Eastern Europe into Russia. The Lecter family survived in the woods for three and a half years of Hitler’s eastern campaign. Then his parents died in the invasion of Germans by the Stuka dive bomber which fell to his hunting lodge.

There was still Lecter and his younger sister, Mischa remained. One night, six Lithuanian militiamen consisted by Zigmas Milko, Bronys Grentz, Enrikas Dortlich, Petras Kolnas, Kazys Porvik and Vladis Grutas hide at the Lecter’s lodge in the
woods. Finding no food in cold Baltic winter, they ate Mishe who was sick in front of Hannibal Lecter himself.

Since the tragedy happened to him, he lived in the orphanage but he dreamed about the tragedy although he became amnesia and did not remember how his younger sister, Mischa died. He just remembered about the death of his parents. His charming personality changed into psychopath.

Hannibal Lecter was thirteen years old and he lived in the orphanage after the death of his parents and his younger sister during the war. He was found in the woods after the war like a deaf and mute child because he did not gave respond to people who talked to him. He was so mysterious until Robert Lecter, his uncle brought him to live in France with Lady Murasaki, his wife in 1946. Lady Murasaki was a graceful woman and she reminded Hannibal to the figure of his mother. She was a beautiful woman who gave warmth and affection to him so he loved this woman very much. He protected Lady Murasaki and did everything that his aunt wanted.

When a butcher named Paul Momund, in the market insulted his aunt, he became so angry and acted cruelly. Few days later, Paul Momund was found death in the pier and Hannibal was estimated as the suspect. He was investigated by a police named inspector Popil but he lied about the death of Paul Momund that he killed. He could not be sent into the jail because of insufficient proof.

Hannibal was the youngest person ever admitted to medical school in France, approximately seventeen years old because his genius brain. He finally found the way how Mischa was killed by injecting himself with a combination of thiopental sodium and two other hypnotics to release his repressed memory, since he was
doctor. He knew that Mischa was eaten by six Lithuanian militiamen. When he was eighteen years old, he went back to Lithuania. He took revenge against the killers of his sister and became serial psychopath killer.

He killed the six Lithuanian militiamen and ate them. Inspector Popil as special police for war crimes finally found out that Hannibal was the killer of Paul Momund, the butcher and those six Lithuanian militiamen. He sent him to jail but only for three weeks because as a genius psychopath, Hannibal made a petition to the court that he was a victim of a German war so he asked the court to allow him returned to medical school and he would help Police Forensic Laboratory. He was released by the government because many demonstrators support his behavior as revenge to war criminals.