

# The off chance

## The challenge of writing a realistic HannibalXWill lovestory

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### Kapitel 4: 4. Chapter

One week.

One week of not meeting Hannibal's eyes, trying to look away, giving monosyllabic answers during dinner. One week of fearing physical contact in any way, keeping his distance and flinching from every casual touch. One week of having to put up with his own thoughts.

Thinking about Hannibal. Dreaming about Hannibal. Fantasizing about Hannibal.

He had never believed himself to be mad. Strange, yes, abnormal, yes, sick at some points in his life. Never mad or crazy. Now he felt like it. His every thought circled around that kiss like a hawk who had driven its prey into a hole with no other exits. Spiraling like a sinner's soul on his long and painful way down to hell.

Some nights he had felt hell's fire licking at his skin. Other nights he had dreamed it was Hannibal's tongue. Some moments he had seen haunting ghosts, shivered in fear and put his arms around himself. Sometimes he had imagined they were Hannibal's. Some evenings he had shot the other curious looks and hated himself for it. Some days he had held those furtive memories dear.

It tore at him. It threatened to tear him apart. How was he supposed to deal with this? He had never ... no one had ever ... he had seldom showed interest in another person and he had always known it was futile. Alana was the only one who had ever ... whom he ever thought he had a chance with. And even then he had known that was only wishful thinking.

From early on he had dreamed that someone would offer him his or her love. Someone who would see him as he was, understand him and hold him dear. Someone who would accept his jumbled emotions as the love and sincere longing that they were.

Hannibal was as far from that ideal as one could get. He was unable to feel positive emotion or sincerely express it. He had admitted that he lacked in understanding Will – which made Will interesting to him in the first place – and that he planned for the worst possible ending. His motive in kissing him had been to see if he could be a substitute lover. And if he succeeded he wanted to kill Will.

The most rational reaction would have been to have rejected Hannibal on the spot. He was neither a suitable lover nor would it have been safe to accept him even if he were. But Will had never been the most rational of men when it came to matters of the heart. He was socially inept and he knew it. And he also knew that he would never have a lot of romantic opportunities. By age twenty-three he had decided that it did

not matter to him if his suitor was male or female as long as they would give him a chance.

And it certainly did not help that he tended to madly fall in love with even a possibility of a romance. Which subsequently made him fall madly in love with whoever offered the possibility. It was just too rare and precious not to savor. One kiss was enough to send him head over heels.

That one kiss was enough to be madly drawn to a guy least suited to be his lover ever. So even without wanting to he awoke to the ghostly feel of fingertips on his skin. Lips caressing his own. Hair tickling his shoulder. Even the pale moonlight felt like a soft breath on his calves. It was driving him mad in ways he had never thought possible. He could not look at Hannibal without thinking of what could be. Even knowing that he was day-dreaming a reality which had zero chance of coming true, he could not stop his thoughts. Had he not known better, he would have said his immune system had overreacted and given him hallucinations.

He began to doubt himself in a whole new way: What if Hannibal could be rehabilitated? He might not be able to feel much but he wasn't a classical psychopath. He actually lacked some characteristics of an antisocial personality disorder. First of all, he was not impulsive. He did not kill whenever the urge to do so struck him. He planned his murders. Secondly, he was intelligent. And thirdly, he was creative.

All three of those factors were completely atypical for an ASPD patient or a psychopath. It was exactly those three factors which had made it impossible for the police to catch him. And those same three factors might yet become Will's salvation. Hannibal did not have to kill. He had the self-control to curb his impulses. If boredom really was his only motivation, alleviating that boredom should be able to get him to stop killing.

Theoretically.

On the other hand Will had tried his best for the last one month and a half to entertain Hannibal. Still the guy planned to kill him. And for what? So that he would not have to face his loss if Will ever left by another way? But wasn't that a strange thought in and of itself? Of course he had met his share of murderers who had killed all their girlfriends with that reasoning. But shouldn't Hannibal have been immune to such feelings? If he could not feel regret, could he really feel loss?

It seemed so. Amidst all the emotions Hannibal could not feel, loss was the one he could. It was strange, wasn't it? If he could feel loss, didn't that imply that he could hold someone or something dear?

Will tried to recall all the psychopaths he had ever met or read case reports about. Everyone of them had a whole bunch of emotional deficits. They could not feel any positive emotions. They could not feel guilt or regret. They did not respond to punishment. Their answer to every challenge in life had been to get angry or aggressive. Instead of grieving they sunk into depression, mostly alleviating their negative emotions with alcohol or drugs. If they killed, they killed on the spur of a moment. They'd break into a house looking for money, unexpectedly run into a woman, rape her, and then kill her to keep her from going to the cops.

And every one of them had been as stupid as white bread.

Precious few had been intelligent enough to form sentences with more than seven words. Those cases were well documented with all their interviews published. But even those were impulsive, aggressive and only calm if left alone. Creative murderers who killed for art's sake were mostly a Hollywood invention.

On the other hand they existed. Hannibal was living proof of that. And Will was a

specialist in those rare cases. He of all people should have been able to solve the puzzle that Hannibal posed. Was he really only a toy to him? Why would Hannibal want to kill him if he was a toy? Wanting to kill him like Hannibal did implied that he was precious to him. So what had turned him from a mere toy into an important person who drew feelings from Hannibal?

Will fastened the bathroom towel around him and sat upon the toilet. Not that he had to use it, it was just convenient. The bathroom was warm and except for that one time Hannibal had never followed him here. He could relax here.

He closed his eyes.

His name was Hannibal Lector. He was a psychiatrist who murdered people for artistic reasons and to alleviate his boredom. He had taken in the pet he had played with before for fun. He kept that pet to study it.

Spotlight.

His pet had been most interesting. The most interesting thing he had seen in years. His unique abilities, his disease, his newest behavior – it seemed a great study. He had wanted to enjoy that taste to the fullest. Until something unusual happened: His pet had become another being to him.

It had happened only once before. Abigail had been interesting to him. Against his better judgment he had let her live for quite some time. Killing her had been unexpectedly painful. Not actual pain, he had never felt that kind of ripping sensation some of his clients described. But thinking about what could have been brought tears to his eyes.

That came completely unexpected.

Having similar feelings again now was even more unexpected. Feelings for a daughter might be something genetic. But feelings for an unrelated human, especially feelings of love ... it seemed too strange a concept. Still it seemed to be exactly what he had looked for – something new. Love was new. Loss was new. Maybe he might even be able to feel a twinge of regret if he killed him.

And he would kill him.

Not because he was bored with him. Far from it. He would kill him exactly because he was interesting. He wanted to see what that would do to himself. Maybe he might be able to experience some feeling for the first time in his life. Scientifically he should be able to feel. His threshold was just much higher than other people's.

He might be the first human ever to invoke real feelings in him. It was an honor to be killed for that. Most likely his pet would not see it this way but who knew? It was able to think itself into all kinds of psyches. Maybe it would understand. Maybe it would appreciate being killed.

Will opened his eyes. His breath came out shaky. Even though the mirrors were still fogged, the room seemed unexpectedly cold to him. He did not have to puke like the last time but he felt far from stable. So Hannibal wanted him dead for experimental reasons. He even wanted him to be thankful for it.

And worst of all, one of his main thoughts was how sweet it was to count for that much.

“Good morning” Warm lips pecked his cheek before he could flinch from them. “How did you sleep?”

I dreamed about you. That nearly left Will's lips but he was able to hold back. He just nodded and ducked his head to concentrate on his breakfast. And maybe so he would

not be the target of any more affection this morning.

It was simply amazing how someone with next to no feelings at all could still understand humans so well and give one so much attention and appreciation without even feeling the need to. It was just what Hannibal did. Like a standardized program taken from a TV show for dedicated husbands.

Worst of all it worked.

Every day it got harder not to look up and smile. To expect and reciprocate that kiss. To take his hand and hold it while he sat down. To let yourself be fed and tell the other how well done the eggs were. It reminded him of kindergarten where he had watched some girls play house.

It was disgustingly sweet. It was exactly what Will had always craved.

"Would you like me to scramble some eggs?"

I'd like you to do a hell lot of things. Will just closed his eyes. Really, this was pathetic. He was an appalling creature when he was in love. Wasn't there any hormone injection against this kind of thing? He just sat there, tried not to look up and blush like a virgin. Well, in his own way he was a virgin. That kiss last week had been the third he had ever had. One with Alana, one with a girl in high-school who had lost a bet and had to kiss a creepy guy. That had been him. The joy of being a freak.

"Stay with me."

He hadn't noticed the hand on his cheek, so the voice speaking directly in front of him startled him. Will jerked back. Near, too near. He nearly toppled out of his chair trying to get away from Hannibal.

"Sssch" The other gripped his upper arms and gently pulled him back. "I am sorry I scared you. You look like a deer caught in headlights" Amusement tinged his voice.

"I'm- ... I mean ... err" Will stammered and blushed furiously. Damn, he had it bad.

"Please."

"Please what?" Hannibal smiled. "Kiss me?"

God, yes! Will shook his head but that meant turning it in Hannibal's direction. He caught his head with a hand and his lips with his own. It didn't even take a second before he melted against the kneeling guy in front of him like butter on hot toast. God, his resolve was easily overcome.

He was much too easy, he knew – he still couldn't stop. It was all he ever wanted. More than he had ever dared dream of. And it had come true in one smashing instant without any chance of mentally preparing for it's onslaught.

Just like this kiss. And even without having any basis of comparison Will knew that Hannibal kissed damn well. It was warm and there was pressure and the tip of the other's nose caressed his cheek. And some days – like this morning – he just forgot he was supposed to resist and let a tongue in that danced with his own.

It all blended together into a blissful haze. At least until those lips parted from him and he was held back from following by a gentle touch on his shoulder. It was a sweet, fey moment right before the regret and guilt and shame came back and broke over him in agonizing waves.

Like exactly now.

Will gasped and jumped from his chair. Hannibal had already drawn back. He looked around wildly for him and found him quietly putting away the breakfast utensils. Will just turned and stormed out to barricade himself in the restroom.

Really. What had he been thinking? Hadn't he thought at all? This guy's agenda was to kill him. Kill him when he was most happy and if he continued this way that certainly wouldn't be far in the future. Why did Will just allow all that? What made him react to

Hannibal like a fourteen-year-old girl? If he could trust his word even Abigail had had more sense than he showed right now. What would it take to remind him he was here because Hannibal was a dangerous serial killer?

By eleven he had worked up the courage to call Jack. Even when he picked up the receiver he had to remind himself he had nothing to lose. If Jack told him there were as many victims as before, it was even more proof that Hannibal could not be trusted. "Special agent Jack Crawford, Head of Behavioral Sciences department. Who's speaking?"

"It's me ... Will" He braced himself for rejection.

"Something new on the front?" The other was talking business and nothing else.

"Well ... I tried to keep him occupied and ... I just wanted to ask if there was any change. Less bodies or ..." He couldn't even finish the sentence. He was shaking in his seat. He hated talking to people who he knew had a bad opinion of him.

"We had no Chesapeake-Ripper murders. But that's not unusual. We had one person with missing organs but that could be tracked to a smuggler ring. We had more bodies in total but the murders were a lot less sophisticated. If this trend keeps up and if I believed your Hannibal story I'd say he tracked and killed newbie murderers."

"He did. He was looking for a challenge, so he tracked down his own kind" He thought. He wasn't all too sure his suspicions were true. "At least that is what my profiling says."

"Humor me for a moment. What does your profiling tell you about him?" Jack sounded slightly interested.

"He kills for fun. Most things bore him, he needs the kick. Not only of killing but of knowing that you will never get him. That he could parade through your office and pin his crimes on your own employees. That he can kill your employees and you would still not suspect him. Or even if you suspected him that you would never be able to get him. He wants to see how far he can go. His next target will most likely be me" He should not think about that kiss, he just should not ... it had felt so good. "He knows we are not on good terms anymore, so my body will either just disappear or it will look like a suicide."

"Don't think that if we find out that you killed yourself we will arrest him and put him on trial. It sounds more likely that you would kill yourself to spite us all than that he'd kill you. Psychopaths are impulsive. They don't plan, they just do."

"Jack, Hannibal is different" Will pleaded. "He is not impulsive at all but he is still a serial killer. Those murders are well planned. Remember those last Chesapeake-Ripper murders with the changed time of death? Those were planned deaths."

"Or just as impulsive as all the others because there were no changes in the time of death because Dr. Lector is not the killer!" Jack bellowed. "You are obsessed. Go die in peace, Will, you are getting on my nerves. Don't call if you don't have evidence."

There was a loud crack, followed by the dial tone. Will took a deep breath and slowly put down the receiver. Well ... that did not go so well. Understatement of the year – that went horribly. He wouldn't even die for a reason. Jack had decided not to investigate if he died and it looked like suicide? He knew he wasn't in favor right now but that ... he knew that feeling. There was something in his throat choking him. Choking and reaching down to his heart to squeeze it.

It was sadness. A desperate sadness, the feeling of being lonely and unimportant. It

felt like your heart was being ripped out and shredded into pieces. He felt like crying. And he hated crying – it made him feel like a helpless child. It did not remind him of times where people eased his sorrow because there had never been such a time. Crying only meant being humiliated further because people could see your pain and tease you for it. At least there was no one in the anteroom right now and no one was expected. He could cry to his heart's delight if he wanted to. He decided he wanted to. There was only death left for him anyway.

"You seemed a bit out of sorts after lunch" Hannibal said while they had dinner. "Did something happen today?"

"Nothing" Who was he kidding? Was it even worth keeping us this charade? "Jack told me I was a drama queen and it would be more believable that I would kill myself to get dirt on you than you being a serial killer."

"You seem to have taken it rather well" Will just raised his eyebrows in disbelief. "Normally you would have asked yourself if he might be right and if you might be hallucinating again."

"Well, regular guys don't tell their ... whatever I am they would kill me. Or how you killed other people" Still, he was right. When had he gained such self-confidence? The irony of knowing you would only be here for a short time? "Don't try mind-games at this point."

"If I wanted to I would have given you evidence of your changing moods and suicidal behavior in the recent past. As well as questioned you on your belief that I really am who you think me to be. But those games don't work on people with self-confidence."

"I guess I adapted" Will just smiled ruefully.

"Are you sure?" Hannibal had lowered his voice. It sounded amused. It sounded seductive.

Will blushed instantly. Hannibal seemed to have no problem at all keeping him off balance. Worst of all how could he react to this change of topic? Hannibal had just admitted to being a serial killer. And it only took a change of tone to get his mind back to sex again.

Did he just think that? It wasn't about sex! It was about ... kissing and hugging and intimately doing ... well, maybe it was about sex. Could he be any more pathetic? Did it matter? He would die and he could not help anyone with it anyway. Why not enjoy the short time he had left?

"You always lose yourself in your thoughts" Hannibal's voice was right next to him. He certainly used his chances well. "I never know if you are here with me or somewhere else" A hand turned his face in Hannibal's direction. "Sometimes I am not sure if you aren't with someone else in your mind."

"Like who?" Will intentionally leaned his head into the hand on his cheek. Was he provoking Hannibal right now? Consciously? When had he become so daring?

"Who knows?" Hannibal moved in but didn't kiss him. "Some people who do not give a damn about you seem to matter a lot to you. Especially Jack."

"Can you feel jealousy?" Will's voice wasn't more than a whisper.

"Do you plan on finding that out?" They had both moved so closely that there wasn't more than a few centimeters between their lips. "Might be a bad idea."

"Might be ..." Will's lids were half-closed. He could feel Hannibal's breath on his skin. At some point in time a hand had placed itself on his neck and drawn him in. He could feel Hannibal's body warmth. He could smell him. He could feel him.

Just when had they started kissing?

Who knew someone without emotions could still be this passionate? Or maybe it was his own passion just overflowing and spilling all over them. No matter what – it was incredible. Hands on his arms, his sides, his skin. Lips on his mouth, his jaw, his throat. Without exactly noticing how and when he had moved onto Hannibal's lap and wrapped his arms around him. And when had that hand sneaked under his shirt?

"Whoa, wait, I—" He jumped up, bumped into the table and scurried sideways. "I think I ... I just remembered I had to ... I mean ..." He escaped through the door to the living room. "Thank you for dinner. See you later."

He ran.

What the hell had he been thinking?

This was Hannibal! The guy who wanted to kill him. Had he completely lost his mind? He most assuredly had taken leave of his senses but ... just why did it have to feel so good?

To be finally acknowledged. To be judged as worthy of something – even if it was only a death in happiness. It wasn't love but it felt close enough. It felt divine. Even knowing it was just a prelude to his death ...

Really, would dying be so bad? Everyone had to die one day. Sure, he had this animal instinct to survive but was surviving what he consciously wanted? Being alive meant that he had to work with people who would never understand him, live alone and dream of things he would never have. Was dying young that bad when it meant you could die happy?

Even if he decided it wasn't, did he have any chance to get away? He could leave the house, sure. But how far could he go? Where could he go? There was no home waiting for him, no friends, not even his dogs. There was nothing left for him in life.

He had never known happiness in his thirty eight years of life. Wasn't that a good predictor for his future? Here was someone offering him everything he ever wanted. For the price of his life, okay, but still ... to be loved and to die happy. Didn't people in the movies always say that it was better to have lived with love for a short time than to live long without love?

Just a few hours ago he had been more than ready to throw his life away. It hadn't been the thought of death that had startled him. Only ... well, his fears. Those fears that were never silent. Those fears of being inadequate, of disappointing others and of being left alone.

Suddenly he felt cold. The blanket that had warmed him for hours was still there but the warmth did not seem to reach him. He shivered and pulled his arms around himself. This time he consciously imagined they were Hannibal's.

"Hannibal ..."

"Yeah?", asked someone no more than a meter behind him.

Will spun around but of course it was dark. Though he did not need light to recognize the voice. He crawled to the other edge of his bed before he asked the darkness: "What are you doing here?"

"Waiting for you to call out" The rustling told him that Hannibal was slipping into his bed. His hearing proved right when a hand touched his upper arm and drew him back into bed without much force.

"Am I dreaming?" Will bit his lip but followed the pull. He ended up stretched out at Hannibal's side with his head on the other's shoulder.

"Would that be a good dream?"

"I ... guess so" Will looked up but even up close he wasn't able to see anything. "I have had dreams about you for weeks now."

"And what would I do in those dreams?" His voice held amusement.

"Err ... well" Will felt redness crawling up his face. Thank God it was dark. "You ... kiss me?"

As if it were one of those movie scenes that runs in slow motion as soon as the lovers touch, Hannibal gently lifted his face with a hand under his jaw and joined their lips. It wasn't shy but at the same time it wasn't forceful. I gave Will the opportunity to draw away without actually giving him a reason to. It seemed unhurried and sweet and warm all at the same time. By now it seemed familiar. It tasted of coming home.

It was a taste he had never had before.

He had never understood why people rushed home after work. For him leaving work meant that he had to think about what to do with himself instead of just being given tasks. It seemed like a bother. But sinking into Hannibal's embrace, sharing kisses and warmth, it felt like he could finally understand.

Those kisses felt good. That hand under his nightshirt felt good. The weight of that leg resting between his own felt good. He only began shivering when Hannibal pulled off his shirt but as soon as it was off he was wrapped into strong arms and pulled against a warm, completely naked body. Will just pushed into that warmth without even sparing the strangeness of a naked body a thought. His shivering because of cold and fear turned into quite different shivers. There was a hand caressing his back. Another hand caressing his back as well, just a bit further down. It pulled him against Hannibal from time to time so that he was pressed tightly against the other's stomach and leg. And what lay in between. After a few pulls Will drew up his leg over Hannibal's to be able to be pressed more tightly against him.

That that hand stopped on his upper bottom to increase friction only made him sigh in appreciation. He could feel the slight wetness staining his pajamas as well as his stomach. He wanted to be even closer. All this felt like he was melting and his only wish was to meld with Hannibal's skin. So he did not even think of resisting when Hannibal leaned against him. He just went with the flow and rolled over, so that Hannibal could settle between his legs.

All the while the kissing had never stopped. Even rolling together they kissed. The kisses still had a lazy touch to them but it was mingled with hunger. And with Hannibal's weight on top of him they turned a lot more hurried. Soon enough they had turned to devouring each other. There were lips and teeth and tongues and much more importantly there was force. Just as there was more and more friction between their midsections.

They only parted for the question "May I?" when Hannibal pulled off Will's trousers but he wasn't even sure if he had answered or not.

He only remembered the feel of hot flesh, skin, hair and the scent of musk. He remembered moaning and not knowing if it was his own or Hannibal's. He remembered clinging onto Hannibal and leaving scratch marks on his back. He remembered kissing until their lips felt bruised. He remembered coming and mingling his seed with Hannibal's on his stomach.

He remembered smiling.

It flashed like a dream-come-true-story right before his eyes.

And even though it was pitch-black in the room he knew Hannibal could feel his smile. For the first time in his life – he was happy.

