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‘Hannibal’

deserves a fourth season

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NBC’s “Hannibal” series ran for three seasons, beginning in 2013 and ending in 2016. “Ending,” however, is somewhat up in the air, considering almost everyone involved in the series is adamantly and openly interested in continuing it. The show still has a very active fanbase, and the writer, Bryan Fuller, has remained involved in said fanbase. He has also stated he has numerous ideas for potential future seasons. This isn’t surprising, given statements that make it clear each season was treated as though it could’ve been the series’ last. Those involved seemed to have been surprised that the show was airing at all; possibly all the more so after

season three was released, when the more network-unfriendly aspects were amped to 11. It’s almost surprising that the series managed to release three seasons, given how insane it objectively is. The fact that they were able to create a series based around the well-known character of Hannibal Lecter and turn it into an artistic exploration of gay love, mental illness, manipulation, perception and more is amazing. The series, particularly the third season, is quite experimental. The first season had some level of a formula, with each episode essentially featuring a new serial killer. This formulaic entry is pretty standard for network television to get established before allowing the creators free rein. By season two, there is more focus on the two protagonists and

their very complex relationship. While some fans claim they would’ve been more satisfied had the series ended after two seasons, season three was well-received by many. As I mentioned, season three seemed to be doing away with network TV standards and formulas, which some people don’t like. While I have my complaints about the season (primarily with the primary antagonist), it was very artistically creative. I really enjoyed how overt the relationship between Will and Hannibal was during this season, as we only got a real hint of it at the end of season two. SPOILERS AHEAD! Season three ended on a cliffhanger (sorry), and like the season two finale, works as a satisfying and crushing end to the series, while also being open to

continuation. A fourth season could go in any number of directions, but we know that it would allow us to see Hannibal and Will’s relationship more closely, and particularly what life looks like for Will, now that he’s made a complete (seemingly) transition into being the person Hannibal perceived and encouraged him to be. Much of the series explored this darkness in Will, with it being entirely unclear if it even existed or was a projection from Hannibal. Will’s “last” act was him trying to destroy that part of himself that he can no longer deny. In failing to do so, there is much he can wrestle with. We may see him simply end up exactly where Hannibal is when we met him. Along with that, while we were able to get some information on

the backstories of both characters, it was extremely limited, specifically for Will. A fourth season would be an opportunity to expand on that. The cancellation of the series after season three was not surprising given the subject matter, high costs and relatively low viewership. Some think the low viewership had to do with poor marketing. It wasn’t clear that the premise of the show is as character-focused and artistic as it is, which I can attest to because I was very hesitant to watch the series. I figured there was nothing in it I would enjoy (especially as someone who hates gore). “Hannibal” is a bit niche, and a cult classic in the sense that the fans are very dedicated, but few and far between. It isn’t a series with mass appeal. Despite this, it seems just about everyone involved in the making of the series is incredibly dedicated and interested in continuing with the stories and characters, with a fanbase that will most certainly tune in. Some are concerned about a possible season four simply because they really enjoyed how it ended thus far. I’m not concerned about that particular worry given the track record of each season finale, all of which were incredibly strong. They got progressively better, and when someone nails the season finales three times in a row, my confidence in their ability to do so again only increases. “Hannibal” is incredibly unique and has very dedicated creators who care about the characters and the story deeply. Since the series has an established fanbase, it is ripe to be renewed for a fourth season. The show would probably be more suited for streaming given it never fit into the confines of network TV very well, but streaming services have also canceled many strong series, so who knows. All that us “Hannibal” fans can do is hope.



Mads Mikkelsen as Hannibal Lecter, the titular protagonist of NBC’s “Hannibal” series. The show ran for three seasons, the latest of which was released in 2016. PHOTOS COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

FEED THE BIRDS: SMALL ACT, BIG IMPACT

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There are only a few pieces of media — film, television, music — that really shape a person. They can change someone’s life permanently, unrecognizable from who they were before. For me, one such movie was “Mary Poppins.” I must have been two or three years old at the time, and my father wanted to show me a movie. When I was younger, I was scared of trying new things, and when I asked my dad what the film was about, he said, “Mary Poppins is a witch.” That royally freaked me out. I ran around the house trying to avoid watching the film. It took my dad holding me in his arms, so tightly I couldn’t squirm my way out, to get me to settle down. When Mary Poppins, with her umbrella and carpet bag, appeared on a cloud, my dad whispered in my ear, “Mary Poppins is magic.” From there, there was no

turning back. I watched the movie countless times and sang the songs even more. I was even in a summer camp production of the show. Through all this, there was one song in particular that really stood out to me as something special. It wasn’t the more popular “Spoonful of Sugar” or “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.” It was “Feed the Birds.” “Feed the Birds” occurs at the midpoint of the film, where the magical nanny Mary Poppins has already become ingratiated with her wards, Jane and Michael. However, their strict yet distant banker father, Mr. Banks, is not amused and feels threatened by the children’s love for Mary. But Mary is not here to tear apart a family; rather, she’s here to reunite one. She decides to trick Mr. Banks into accepting an outing with his children to the bank. Despite what one may think, the outing is not a teaching experience for the children, but for their father. In preparation, the night before, Mary sings “Feed the Birds.”

The song tells the tale of the bird woman, sitting in front of St. Paul’s Cathedral, homeless, a beggar. There, she sells bird feed for a measly tuppence. The song says that, despite her meek appearance and low stature, the saints and apostles of the church smile upon her and anyone who gives her money, showing their compassion and charity. It is reminiscent of Matthew 25:40 where Jesus says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” With the message fresh in their minds, Michael tries to go to the bird woman, but his father refuses, telling Michael he has a better way for him to use his tuppence: the bank. In the bank, Mr. Banks and the other executives tell the children of all the ways the bank could use their money: to invest, to accumulate, to build infrastructure, to colonize, to exploit. But the children stand resolute. They want to feed the birds. They would rather be charitable and kind than

selfishly gain immense wealth. It is notable that when they still refuse, the bankers forcibly take the money from their hands. There was never a choice. The obvious takeaway is that charity and benevolence are paramount. Caring for others stands above self-interest, avarice and greed. However, it also teaches that there are forces, powerful forces, that will try to stop that kindness. They will convince you that greed is a form of caring. That by being greedy, the effects of that greed will help everyone. If this was evident in the 1910 setting of the story and in the 1964 release of the movie, it is all the more clear now. Our world has become inundated by consumerist and selfish desires. Trends cycle what seems like every day, and if you can’t afford the latest Labubu or Erewhon smoothie, you are looked down on as lesser or not hardworking enough. Gift giving, not for the sake of exchange or leverage, but giving unconditionally, has fallen by the way-

side. Many people my age agree not to give gifts at all. Suffering is no longer seen as tragic but is viewed with an apathetic eye, either ignored or bet on in prediction markets. But it doesn’t have to be this way. “Feed the Birds” sends the message that a little act of kindness, a small moment of respect and care, can change someone’s life, and eventually the world. When Michael refuses to give his tuppence to the bank, that small act — one he was just as meaningless and unimportant by the bankers — creates a run on the bank. This shuts it down for the first time in over a century. How can such an act, which the bankers cared about so much about, be considered meaningless? If anything, it is the most meaningful. So remember the bird woman. Hold the door, ask someone how their day is going, give a meal to the man on the street corner. You don’t realize how much your tuppence is worth. Pay it forward.