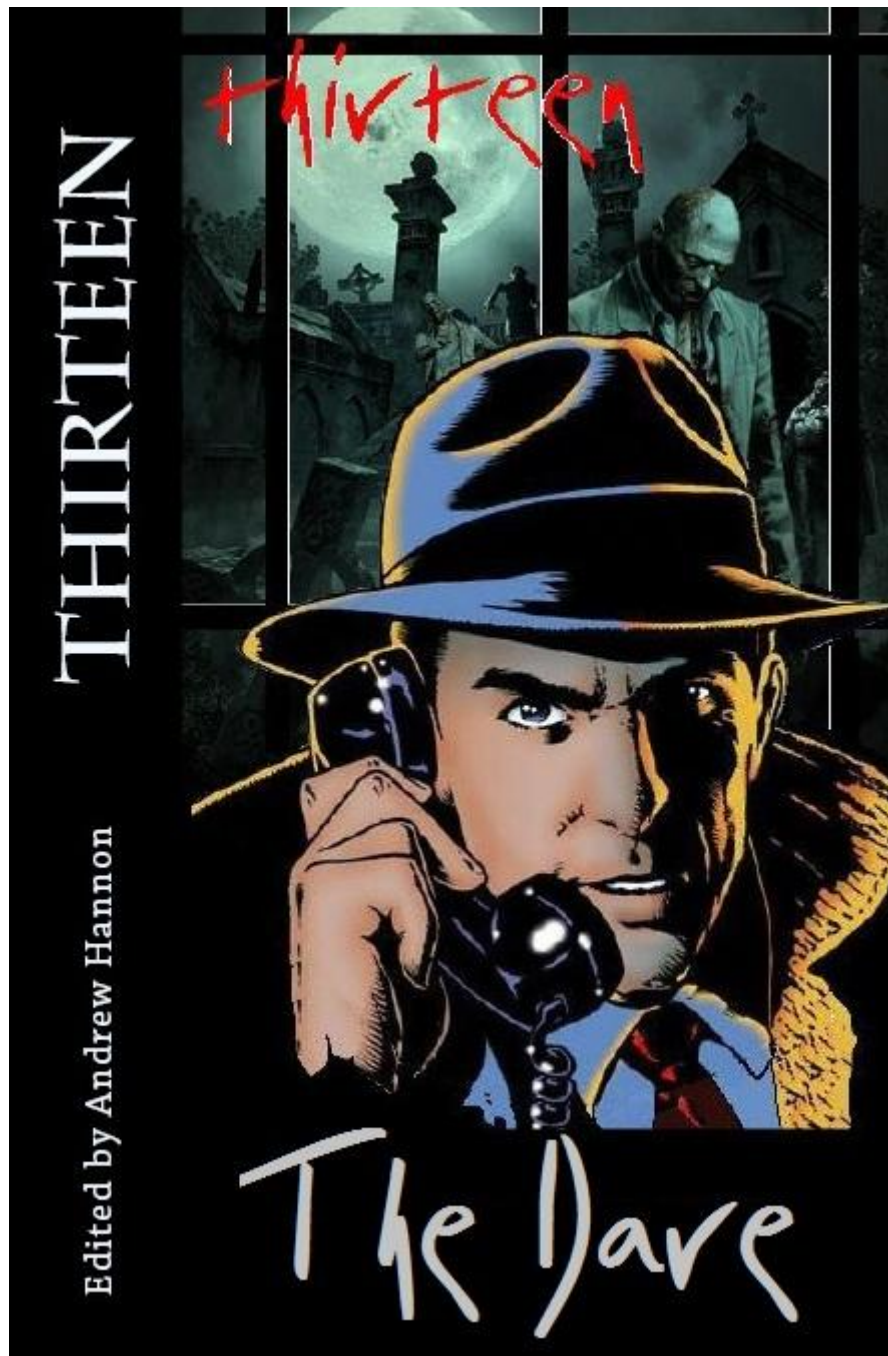


Make yourself uncomfortable...



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thirteen

The Dare

Edited by Andrew Hannon



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First published in the United States in 2010

ISBN: 978-1-4657-3815-8

Please do not perform 'The Dare' in Italy, as you may be arrested.

THE DARE

DARRAN YORK

Some of you will already know me from 'The Magic'. The rest of you, I guess this is the first time you've had the pleasure.¹

For the first timers, let me explain something to you very briefly and get you up to speed with all of this and how it's going to work.

I set challenges for people. Little dares for the brave, curious or foolish to try. If you play along all the way to the end, then you win. But if you just read the words like you're reading any old story, you fail... and you're wasting your time.

This will only work if you do exactly as you're told. Any feeling of disappointment you get if you read but don't play will be entirely attributable to you. I'll say it myself and save you the bother – this story will not be scary if you don't participate. It will not terrify you if you don't play along. It will not freak you out if you don't give it a shot. In fact, it will bore you. You may as well go and read the nutritional information on your cereal box instead.

Any judgment on the ability of this story to petrify is invalid if you have not been brave enough to attempt The Dare.

I've got experience in these things, believe me. I've seen it all before. You've got your quick Kindle down-loaders of 'The Magic', who feel aggrieved that they haven't been terrified, even though they didn't follow the very basic instructions. Whiney little bitches. Then there are your freeloaders, who leaf through 'Thirteen Volume One' in the book shops and the libraries, so eager to see what the fuss is about that they miss the ride.

Just so everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet: You want this to work? Play along and fucking try it. It doesn't matter if you're sixteen or sixty-six; the rules apply to everybody the same. This isn't for kids, it's for adults, so if you excuse yourself from participating in the challenge on some kind of self-induced seniority complex then I'm telling you now, you're deluding yourself, buddy. Get involved. If you don't, you will be gutted.

¹ Editor's note: 'The Magic' is the controversial short story which opened Thirteen Volume One. It resulted in the book being banned in Italy and sparked an instant internet sensation, fuelled by people who had attempted to try it. Following numerous reports of strange activity during and after reading it, the story itself is purported to be somehow haunted. Despite its length (it is just over two pages long), it has become known as 'the scariest short story in the world'. In brief, the story requests that you read it alone and follow a number of instructions in order to complete the challenge.

We're going on a little trip. And this time, unlike 'The Magic', you don't need to be alone for it to work. The more the merrier. Witnesses are good.

The Dare

So, step one: I need you to speak to a friend or two. You can show them this story up to this point, or just generally convey to them the following: I want to see if I'm brave enough to try The Dare. It's meant to be freaky. I would like you to come with me to try it. It will take us as long as it takes us to get to the nearest graveyard, then no more than ten minutes.

Arrange a date and a time to meet (early evening is best). Then you, as the instigator, must prepare the following for step two:

A small bag/rucksack... into which you place...

A box of matches

A small mirror

A pen

A single sheet of blank paper

This book, or a print out of 'The Dare'

Once you have put everything into the bag, make your way to the graveyard and only read on from this paragraph once you arrive there. You can film it if you like, just in case people don't believe you've done this all the way to the end. I do like to encourage these sort of things...

Interlude

Did you make it to the graveyard?

Everybody you asked showed up?

Very good.

(I hope you're at the graveyard if you're reading this and not sat in your bedroom reading it on the computer because you're too scared to try it. If you are, you should just skip it. It won't do anything for you. If bedrooms are your thing, try 'The Magic'.)

Let's continue...

Step three: Don't make a nuisance of yourself. As organizer, tell your little group to be on their best behavior. Upsetting people who are mourning will quickly result in the graveyard staff escorting you away, and that's no good. I know the nerves are probably already setting in, and the giddy

excitement can easily lead to silliness, but calm down and make sure everyone is focused and cool. People acting like dicks will ruin this dare, so keep things under control.

Step four: Take a walk around for five minutes (alone, in pairs, all together, whatever) and find the oldest grave you can find. That's the one with the oldest date of death on it, not the oldest date of birth. If there's nothing earlier than 1911, find another fucking graveyard. This will only work with old.

Step five: Gather around the grave.

Step six: Take the pen and paper out of the bag. Rip squares from the paper that are large enough to write a single letter on and write out the following letters:

The first letter of the first name (If there is more than one name on the headstone, go with the longest dead.)

Write the last letter of the last name

Write the first letter of every paragraph from the section under Interlude, on the previous page – there are five of them, from 'D' to 'L'

Everyone in your group to write at least three letters of your choosing. Keep them secret from each other. Do not use the same letter twice when it comes to your go.

Take the year of death. Each number, correspond to a letter from the alphabet. 1889, for example, would be 'a', first letter of the alphabet, 'h', eighth letter of the alphabet, 'h' and 'i'. If there's a zero, skip it.

What month did they die? Add the following accordingly: January – g. February – a. March – i. April – l. May – p. June – w. July – c. August – r. September – m. October – b. November – u. December – t.

If they died on an even number day of the month, add 'f', 't' and 'p'.

If it was odd, 'w', 's' and 'c'

Put all of the letters into your bag. Do not fold them.

Step seven: Tip all of the letters out by your feet. Pick up the ones which landed face up and burn one of them with the match. Put the rest of the ones which landed face-up back into the bag. Leave the ones which are face-down.

Step eight: Take out the little mirror and walk in a circle around the face-down letters three times, pointing the mirror towards the letters. If there are less than six letters, make up the difference with letters from the bag. All of you, as a group, or both of you, as a pair, or just you, if you were brave enough to get this far alone.

Step nine: Pick up the face-down letters, but do not look at them just yet.

Now you're in one of three groups, I'm guessing: One, you're there, doing this, and you're nervous. Two, you're there, doing this, thinking it's lame and nothing's going to happen. Three, you're in your bedroom. (Tut, tut, tut.)

Groups one and two, well done – we are nearly there. Soon, you may be able to say 'I did The Dare.'

Step ten: Take it in turns to turn over the remaining bits of paper. Wait for a word to present itself amongst them as an anagram. It might only be small. Like 'hi'. Or 'run', or 'go'.

What's your word?

The Dare is one of 35 short stories in Thirteen Volume Two, one of the scariest books ever published.

Download a copy or order the book direct from www.13horror.com