

Make yourself uncomfortable...



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# thirteen

The Magic

Edited by Andrew Hannon



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**THE MAGIC**  
**DARRAN YORK**

Have you ever read something and enjoyed it so much you wished you'd never read it, just so you could read it again for the first time? The first time is magical, right? It doesn't matter how many times you read it again, it's never quite as good.

This is your chance to read something truly amazing for the first time. You'll only get this chance once, so don't blow it. I want you to get the most out of this, so you're going to have to trust me. Do exactly as you're told.

If you're not alone right now then put this away immediately. Magic - real magic - is shy of company. It's not going to happen if you're reading this in a crowded coffee shop or sat on a packed train.

Only read from here if you're alone.

Good. We've started.

Now I need you to do a few more things for me - just a few small things. Think of this as an instruction manual, a process you have to follow if you want a thing to work. I'm not trying to be pushy or boss you around just for the sake of it. I just want this to work for you.

Go somewhere you can close the door behind you and read this without being disturbed. It doesn't matter where - your bedroom will do, or a toilet. Anywhere you can go without someone walking in on you. And like I said, close the door after you.

Maybe some of you are reading this and haven't done as you've been instructed. Do you wish you'd played along? I guarantee you, it's better to be a part of this than to simply eavesdrop on the magic. It mightn't be too late though. I can't promise anything but if you go to a quiet place now and close the door... I'll see what I can do.

So, here we are. Or rather, there you are. I really hope you're enjoying this so far. I know nothing has actually happened yet, but aren't you excited? Is your curiosity growing larger and larger? Enjoy this. This is the only time you can feel what you are feeling now. The wonder of what's going to happen, the half-formed conclusions some of you may already have made - all of this can only happen once, can only happen now, can only happen the first time.

Some of the magic has begun already. You are alone in a room, true, but you are also unified with all the people who have ever done this before you, and all of those who will do it after you. Can you feel each other? Perhaps you feel silly about this whole thing, or maybe you feel privileged. You are each a part of an invisible crowd, gathered together outside of time, reading the same words.

Don't worry, that's not the punch of it, and this certainly isn't a joke. I'm not here to waste your time with talk of the metaphysical. And to prove it, we'll move on.

I take it there's light in your chosen room or you wouldn't be able to read this, right?

Come on, you can answer me if I ask you a question! In fact you have to answer me if you want this to work. I'll ask you again. Answer this time. Loud and clear, don't be afraid. Just say, "Right".

Now, now, everybody, let's all play along. All I want is one little spoken word in exchange for all the words I've given you so far. Remember, I'm doing this for you - this is the only chance you'll get and I want it to work.

Answer my question.

Well done! You might have felt silly saying it aloud but there's nobody here to hear you and what harm has been done? Now you can continue to enjoy this, knowing that you've followed the instructions perfectly. And when you follow instructions perfectly, things tend to work.

Do whatever it takes to get your room as dark as possible so that there's just enough light for you to still make out these words. Draw the curtains closed, turn off the main light and put on a side-light. Better still, light a candle or read with the flame from a cigarette lighter. I hate to keep reminding you, but it really will be worth it if you do as I say. It would be such a shame for you to miss out having already come as far as you have.

Allow me to describe your scene. That's kind of strange, isn't it? Shall we take a moment to consider that? Usually when you read something the scene is described for you so that you can picture it in your mind, but here you are reading your very own scene, in which you are sat in a dark room, all alone, reading from wherever you chanced upon this magic. What mighty implications! When you were younger, did you ever pretend to yourself that you were a character in a book or a film and that millions of people read about you and watched what you did? Perhaps the pretence was real?

Don't worry, though, that's not the magic I spoke of earlier.

Enjoy this moment. Here it comes. Here comes the magic.

Very quickly, get up off your bed or chair or place against the wall. Get up and walk over to the door you closed behind you a few minutes ago. Put your ear against the door and listen. Hold your breath.

I wonder if you can hear me.

Let me expand on the scene I described a moment ago. You remember, the one with you in the dark room, reading. Yes, well, outside of that room, on the other side of that closed door, someone you can't see is standing. It's me. I wonder if you can guess my name. The slightly autistic among you may have already registered the first letters of the last five paragraphs and what they spell. It's the closest I have to a name.

Can you hear me breathe? No? Perhaps I'm holding my breath too, with an ear pressed up against the door, trying to hear you.

Or perhaps there is one last step, one last instruction you must follow in order to make this magic work.

Invite me in.

Come now, don't be bashful! You already spoke to me earlier when you answered my question about the light. All you have to do is ask me to come in. You see. I know you're alone in there, all by yourself in the dark. And I want to prove to you that the magic works.

*The Magic is one of 113 short stories in Thirteen Volume One, the scariest book ever published.*

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