

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, continued

- Mr. Porter tells Hannah that besides filing charges with the police, she has two options for dealing with what happened at the after-party. He tells her she can confront the other person or move on. Do you agree that these are her only options? What do you think Clay was hoping Mr. Porter would say to Hannah?
- Reflect on Hannah and Clay's last words to each other in the hallway at school. Discuss their greater meaning within the context of the story. Compare and contrast their last words to the other times in the novel when these same words are uttered under different circumstances. How is it relevant that Clay hears Skye utter these words?
- Discuss Skye's role in the story. Compare and contrast her to Hannah. What do you think Clay says to Skye when he catches up with her in the hallway?
- Why do you think the author ended the story the way he did? How do you think Clay is changed by listening to Hannah's tapes? Do you think the tapes had similar effects on the other listeners? Do you think they all followed Hannah's instructions in the same manner that Clay did? How do you imagine their experiences to be different?
- Could anything have saved Hannah? If one link in this chain of events had been different, which one do you think would have made the most difference for Hannah? How would a change in that specific event have impacted the remaining portion of the other thirteen reasons that followed?
- What will you remember from reading this novel?
- Read Jay Asher's responses to thirteen questions about *Thirteen Reasons Why*, which are printed in the back of the book. Had you the chance, would you have asked Jay the same thirteen questions after reading the story? What else would you like to know? Which of his responses surprised you the most? How do his answers help you to better understand Hannah and the novel?

Host a Unique Book Club Event With Author Jay Asher

Whether your book club takes place in a library, school, bookstore, or home, let Jay Asher help you put together a great teen event . . . even if he can't be there in person. Visit www.thirteenreasonswhy.com or send an email to yrmarketing@us.penguinroup.com to find out how you can receive a package from Jay that includes all the elements you'll need to host an unforgettable evening of book-talking.

HOW TO START YOUR OWN BOOK CLUB

Think it would be hard to start your own book club? Think again!
All you need are some friends who are as excited about the books they read as you are and a little bit of organization.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:

The best way to find people to be in your book club is to ask your friends.

Think of all the people you know who like to read, and ask them to join. If you still don't feel like you have enough people, ask each of your friends to bring someone else. You can usually get a good discussion going with 6–8 people, but any number that is comfortable for you will work. If you're having trouble finding enough cool people to form your club, check with your school, local library, or bookstore to see if there's a group that you can join.

Figure out when and where you want to meet.

Some groups meet once a month, some meet every other month. You could get together at someone's house, in a park, on the beach, or in your school's library. If it sounds too official and overwhelming to decide all the "wheres" and "whens" right now, don't worry! It's YOUR group and so YOU get to make all the decisions. All you have to do is get together once, and you can work out the rest of the details later.

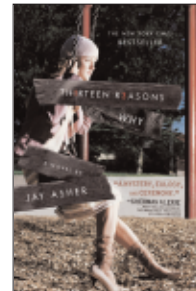
Decide how you will choose books, and how the discussions will be run.

Maybe you have a favorite author that you and your friends would like to focus on. Or maybe you want to take turns picking your favorite book. Maybe one person likes to talk and would like to lead the discussion, or maybe you would rather just get together and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (try the publisher's website) or at your local library or bookstore.

The most important thing to remember is that there's no right or wrong way to have a book club. Do what you're comfortable with and always have fun, and your group will be a success!

For more discussion guides to get your group going, visit
www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians

You can't stop the future.
You can't rewind the past.
The only way to learn the secret
. . . is to press play.



THIRTEEN REASONS WHY

by Jay Asher
978-1-59514-171-2 (HC) • \$16.99
Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up

- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- An ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers
- Selected for seventeen state award master lists
- Winner of three state awards

Clay Jensen returns home from school to find a mysterious box with his name on it lying on his porch. Inside he discovers several cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker—his classmate and crush—who committed suicide two weeks earlier.

On tape, Hannah explains that there are thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life.

Clay is one of them. If he listens, he'll find out how he made the list.

All through the night, Clay keeps listening. He follows Hannah's recorded words through his small town . . . and what he discovers changes his life forever.

Through Hannah and Clay's dual narratives, debut author Jay Asher weaves an intricate and heartrending story of confusion, desperation—and ultimately—hope that will deeply affect teen readers.

★ A brilliant and mesmerizing debut from a talented new author."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"Breakneck pace and dizzying emotion."
—*School Library Journal*

"Readers won't be able
to pull themselves away."
—*Publishers Weekly*

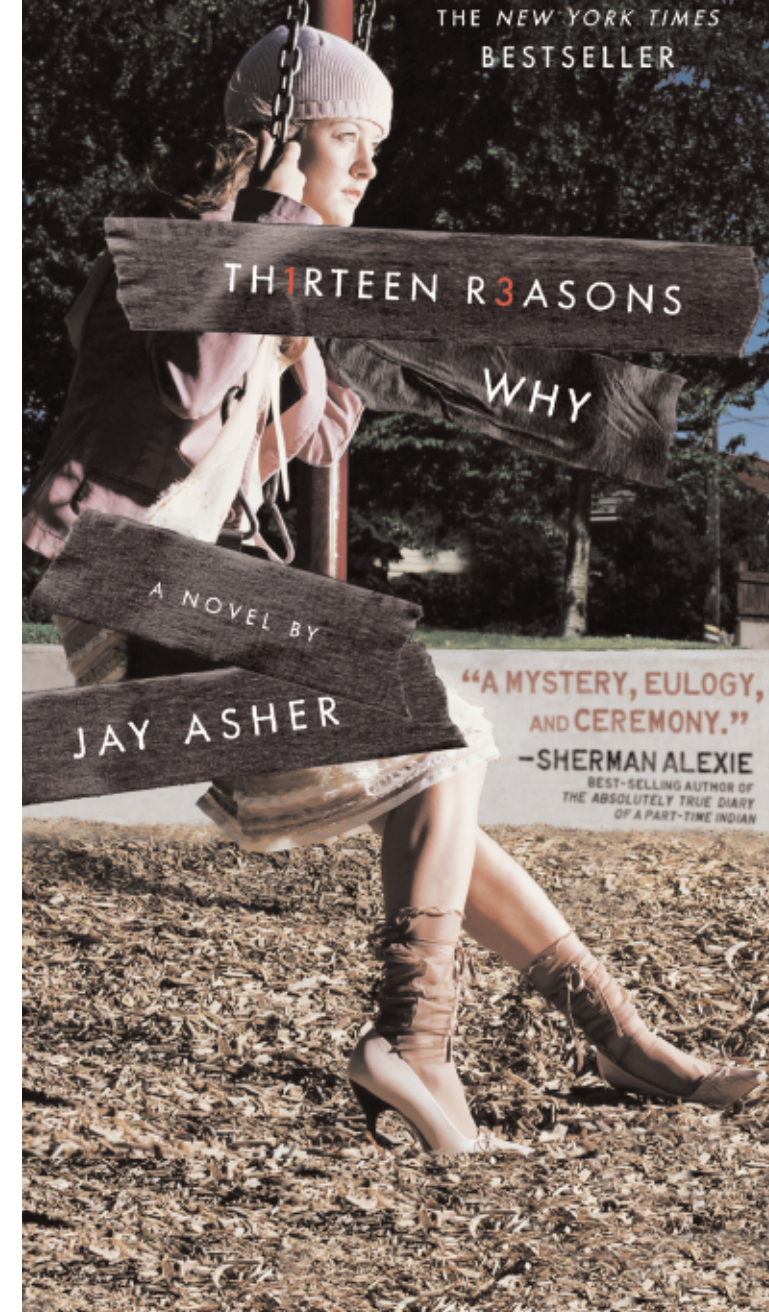
"Eerie, beautiful, and devastating."
—*The Chicago Tribune*



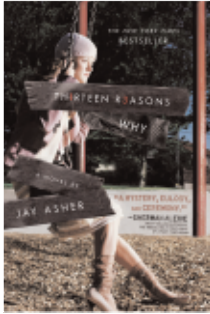
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www.thirteenreasonswhy.com

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DISCUSSION GUIDE 3



ABOUT THE BOOK



THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN HANNAH’S SECRET IS TO PR3SS PLAY.

Clay Jensen doesn’t want anything to do with the tapes Hannah Baker made. Hannah is dead, he reasons. Her secrets should be buried with her.

Then Hannah’s voice tells Clay that his name is on her tapes—and that he is, in some way, responsible for her death.

Clay spends the night crisscrossing his town with Hannah as his guide. He becomes a first-hand witness to Hannah’s pain, and learns the truth about himself—a truth he never wanted to face.

“Every once in a while you come across a book that you can’t get out of your mind.

Jay Asher’s *Thirteen Reasons Why* is one of those books.”

—Ellen Hopkins,

author of the *New York Times* bestsellers

Crank, *Identical*, and *Tricks*

“*Thirteen Reasons Why* is a mystery, eulogy, and ceremony.

I know, in the years to come, I will often return to this book.”

—Sherman Alexie,

author of the National Book Award Winner,

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



JAY ASHER got the idea for *Thirteen Reasons Why* at a museum. While taking an audio tour, he was struck by the eeriness of the voice in his ear—a woman who described exactly what he was looking at, but wasn’t there. Jay lives on the central coast of California. *Thirteen Reasons Why* is his first book. Find out more

about him at www.jayasher.blogspot.com.

Need to talk? 1–800–SUICIDE? www.hopeline.com

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does Hannah and Clay’s dual narrative enhance the story? What additional details are revealed through this method of storytelling that might have otherwise remained secret if the book had been written from only one of their perspectives? How might the story have changed if the book had been written from one of the other people’s perspectives instead of Clay’s? For example, Tony’s?

- Consider the title of the novel. Are each of Hannah’s thirteen reasons of equal importance? Which do you find to be the most unexpected? Who is responsible for Hannah’s death? Why do you think Hannah committed suicide?

- The inside of the book jacket for *Thirteen Reasons Why* pictures a replica of the map that Hannah leaves for each of the people named on her tapes. What does being able to visually trace Clay’s route through town add to your reading experience?

- Discuss the role that the presence of Hannah’s voice plays as a physical presence on the tapes. Is the impact the tapes have different from the impression a suicide note would have left? Why do you think she recorded and left the tapes? If her story had been recorded on CDs or MP3 files would the effect have been different?

- At the beginning of the first tape, Hannah says, “. . . there are thirteen sides to every story.” What does she mean by this? Are there sides to her own story that Hannah doesn’t know? Do you think she would have made different decisions if she had had the chance to listen to each of the other thirteen sides?

- Hannah references rumors that she hoped to get away from when her family moved. What do you imagine she meant? Define the word “rumor.” What comment does this story make about rumors in general? Discuss how rumors and truth can be connected. Is one more powerful than the other? Can rumors be positive? Does Hannah’s story change your original point of view on this subject?

- Hannah also says, “No one knows for certain how much impact they have on the lives of other people. Oftentimes, we have no clue. Yet we push it just the same.” Discuss the concept of individual perception and how it contributes to how Hannah’s story plays out. What do you think she means by “pushing it”? Further on, Hannah says, “. . . I’m sure you must have thought, This can’t be why I’m on the tapes.

It wasn’t a big deal.” How did each of her thirteen reasons push her to her final decision? Do you think they would have each made different decisions about their actions if they had known how they were impacting Hannah’s life?

- During Jessica’s tape, Hannah says, “. . . you would rather believe some made-up rumor than what you knew to be true . . . It was easier to accept. Easier to understand. For [you], the rumors needed to be true.” What does Hannah mean by this? How can the truth sometimes be more difficult to confront than a lie? Discuss the author’s use of the word “need” in the above quotation. How does this particular word choice impact the meaning of Hannah’s sentence?

- Why do you think Clay’s mom reacts to Clay’s actions and responses to her questions the way she does? Do you think she knows he’s lying? Why doesn’t she question him?

- Hannah compares poetry to puzzles and then likens the audio tapes she recorded to poetry. Do you agree with her reasoning? How does this idea keep reappearing throughout the story?

- Discuss the concept of the *Lost–N–Found Gazette* and how it applies to the main themes of truth, betrayal, rumors, and secrets that run throughout the story.

- Discuss the phrase “The truth will set you free.” How does this apply to the story Hannah tells? Does truth really gift freedom? Is there power in knowing? Is there always peace in knowledge?

- Discuss the significance of what the man behind the counter at Rosie’s says to Clay when Clay is about to leave the restaurant.

- While walking to the party, Hannah says, “Even the best moments of the night were affected by that one incident—by that non-incident—in front of my old house.” Describe the difference between “incidents” and “non-incidents.” How can the lack of interaction be just as important or influential as actual confrontation?

- At the beginning of Clay’s tape, Hannah says, “I’m not even sure how much of the real Clay Jensen I got to know over the years. Most of what I knew was second-hand information. And that’s why I wanted to know him better. Because everything I heard—I mean everything!—was good.” How does this relate back to and complicate Hannah’s previously stated feelings about rumors and hearsay and the idea that sometimes people need to believe certain things, regardless of truth?

- Hannah mentions reputations and their consequences repeatedly on the tapes. Why is her reputation important to her? What sort of reputations do the other people on the tapes have? How many of them are disproved through the information Clay learns from the tapes? How does Hannah’s reputation influence Clay’s interaction with her? What is he afraid of?

- Why did Clay leave the room after kissing Hannah? Do you think he had to? What else could he have done? Why does Hannah consider Clay one of the thirteen reasons why she killed herself?

- While listening to his tape, Clay says to Hannah, “You chose this. You had a choice and you pushed me away. I would have helped you.” Do you agree with Clay? Did Hannah consciously make the choice he says she did? What other choices did Hannah have besides suicide? The story revolves around thirteen reasons she believed contributed to the end of her life. Are there thirteen equally important reasons she had to live?

- What does the stop sign that Jenny hits with her car come to symbolize? Discuss what Clay means when he says, “We all could have stopped something.” How does this relate back to Hannah’s decision not to stop the situation between Bryce and Jessica at the party? How do you think that event in particular affected Hannah and her decision to take her own life?

- What roles do adults play in what happened to Hannah? Do you think any adult could have done something that would have helped Hannah? Why do you think Hannah decides to include only one adult on her tapes? Why does she open the truth of her story to an adult at all? Why Mr. Porter in particular?

- Why do you think that Hannah chooses to record her conversation with Mr. Porter rather than comment on their interaction afterwards like she had done with the twelve previous stories? Does this tactic have a different effect?

- At the end of the story, Hannah asks Mr. Porter to define friendship. How would you have responded to this question? What do you think Mr. Porter would have said had Hannah not interrupted him? Discuss the role that friendship plays throughout the story. Hannah says she “never thought of Jessica or Alex as friends.” How did having friends or a lack of friends contribute to her tragedy?