

**PROTAGONIST'S SUFFERING IN JAY ASHER'S
NOVEL *THIRTEEN REASONS WHY***

A THESIS

By

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**SUBMITTED TO
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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Author's Biography

Jay Asher's journey as a writer began with a deep passion for literature. Born on September 30, 1975, in Arcadia, California, he grew up in a supportive family that encouraged his various interests, including music and writing. After completing his education at San Luis Obispo High School, he pursued further studies at Cuesta Community College. During his time there, he developed a strong interest in children's literature and wrote his first two children's books for a class focused on appreciating the genre. This experience ignited his passion for writing books aimed at young readers.

Motivated by this newfound enthusiasm, Asher made the bold decision to leave college in his final year to fully dedicate himself to a writing career. In the early stages of his journey, he focused on creating picture books for children while working various jobs, including in libraries, bookstores, shoe stores, and trophy shops. Although he faced many challenges, his perseverance ultimately led him to success in the young adult fiction genre.

Asher's dedication to writing paid off when he published his first novel, *Thirteen Reasons Why*, in 2007. The book became a *New York Times* bestseller and received widespread acclaim. Winning multiple awards and earning a five-star rating from *Teen Book Review*, the novel captivated readers with its powerful themes and emotional depth. Due to its impact, *Thirteen Reasons Why* was later adapted into a Netflix series in 2017, further increasing its popularity. Renowned authors such as

Ellen Hopkins, Sherman Alexie, Chris Crutcher, and Gordon Korman also praised Asher's storytelling for its compelling narrative.

Beyond *Thirteen Reasons Why*, Asher has continued to expand his literary career. Over the years, he has published several other works, including *The Future of Us*, co-authored with Carolyn Mackler, as well as *What Light* and *Piper*. In addition to these books, he has written several picture books and a humorous novel for high school students. His contributions to young adult fiction have solidified his reputation as an influential author in the genre.

Despite his success, Asher tends to keep details about his personal life private. However, some sources report that he married Joan Marie on September 7, 2002. While little is known about his personal affairs, his work continues to leave a lasting impact on readers, particularly young audiences who connect with the themes he explores in his books.

Appendix II

The Characters of the Novel

- **Hannah Baker** – The protagonist who records tapes explaining the reasons behind her suicide. She initially tries to fit in at her new school but faces betrayal and isolation.
- **Clay Jensen** – A kind and intelligent student who receives Hannah's tapes and becomes deeply affected by her story.
- **Justin Foley** – A popular student whose actions trigger the series of events that lead to Hannah's emotional distress.

- **Jessica Davis** – Hannah’s former friend who turns against her after feeling betrayed.
- **Alex Standall** – The student who creates the "Hot List," which contributes to Hannah’s struggles.
- **Tyler Down** – A school photographer who violates Hannah’s privacy by secretly taking her photos.
- **Courtney Crimson** – A popular student who pretends to be Hannah’s friend but later spreads false rumors about her.
- **Marcus Cooley** – A socially active student who behaves inappropriately towards Hannah on their date.
- **Zach Dempsey** – A well-liked athlete who steals Hannah’s encouraging notes, deepening her loneliness.
- **Ryan Shaver** – A talented writer who betrays Hannah by publishing her personal poem without consent.
- **Jenny Kurtz** – A cheerful student involved in an accident that adds to Hannah’s distress.
- **Bryce Walker** – A wealthy and influential student who manipulates others and commits the most severe harm to Hannah.
- **Mr. Porter** – The school counselor who fails to provide Hannah with the support she desperately needs.
- **Mrs. Jensen** – Clay’s caring and concerned mother.
- **Mr. Jensen** – Clay’s father, who is supportive but less involved.
- **Tony Padilla** – The person Hannah trusts to ensure the tapes reach those responsible.

Appendix III

The Summary of the Novel

Clay Jensen receives an unknown package containing a series of cassette tapes at the beginning of the story. The tapes were recorded by Hannah Baker, Clay's friend who committed suicide two weeks ago after swallowing a handful of pills. Clay listens to the tapes, and Hannah describes how various people at their school, including Clay, played a role in her suicide decision. The plot alternates between the past as recorded on tape and the present.

Side A of the first cassette relates Hannah's story with Justin Foley. Justin is a well-liked student at school. Hannah saw Justin's actions as the beginning of her trouble. Justin took a photo of Hannah when she was sitting on a swing without her consent. The photo was later taken by Justin's friend Bryce Walker and widely circulated at school as a false nude shot of Hannah. Hannah felt alone and humiliated as a result of her other friends' negative reactions.

After that, Hannah involved her friends Alex Standall and Jessica Davis in the next tape. Previously, Hannah was good friends with them, but their relationship became complicated when Alex and Jessica, who were in a relationship, broke up. Alex made a list called the "Hot List," which is a ranking list of the physical appearance of female students at school. Alex compared Hannah with Jessica by writing that one part of Hannah's body was better than Jessica's on his "Hot List" as a way of expressing his pain for Jessica. When Jessica found out about Alex's "Hot List," she slapped Hannah and ended her friendship with her.

Hannah reveals Tyler Down's role in her suicide decision in the following recording. Tyler is a photographer at school. Tyler took a photo of Hannah without

her permission through the bathroom window. This incident triggered feelings of discomfort and disturbance in her. Tyler's actions were also a significant invasion of privacy and wrongdoing, which ultimately contributed to the reason Hannah chose to end her life.

Next, Hannah involved another friend named Courtney Crimson, a popular student at school who had a good image. In the story, Hannah notes that Courtney pretended to be her friend to hide her sexual orientation. Courtney is gay but she doesn't want people to know because it would destroy her positive image. Courtney feels that her friendship with Hannah could harm her reputation. Courtney creates scenarios that shock Hannah while the two of them are together. Courtney also slandered Hannah by telling their other friends that Hannah's previous scandal was true, and this behavior takes a toll on Hannah's emotional state.

In the next recording, Hannah reveals that she once dated Marcus Cooley, a famous student at school. Marcus, on the other hand, was disrespectful to Hannah and attempted to commit an indecent act during their date. Marcus committed this heinous crime without Hannah's permission or consent, and this incident was very detrimental and damaged Hannah's self-esteem.

In the following tape, Hannah revealed her story with an athlete who was also popular at school named Zach Dempsey. Zach steals some personal notes left in a drawer in class by Hannah. These messages were incredibly significant to Hannah because they were her way of coping with her loneliness and struggles. Hannah felt even more lonely and ashamed as a result of Zach's behavior.

Furthermore, another friend of Hannah's named Ryan Shaver was also involved as the reason Hannah ended her life. Ryan is a smart student and talented in

literature. Hannah revealed that she trusted Ryan and shared the very personal poems she wrote with him. However, her trust is shattered when Ryan decides to publish one of Hannah's poems without permission and identifies Hannah as the author.

Next, Clay hears his name mentioned by Hannah in the fifth tape, side A. Unlike many of the other people on the tapes, Clay is not someone who directly harms or violates Hannah in any significant way. Hannah reveals that Clay is on the list because he hasn't done anything wrong; instead, he is there to understand the reasons behind her decisions.

Hannah involved Justin again in the following tape. Hannah witnessed a drunk Jessica being led by Justin into a room where Hannah was also present. Hannah was hiding in a cupboard, so Justin and Jessica had no idea she was there. Hannah noticed Justin abandon Jessica and let Bryce to rape Jessica, who was unconscious due to intoxication. Justin's girlfriend is Jessica, and Bryce is Justin's friend; how could Justin allow his friend rape his girlfriend? Hannah was deeply traumatized as a result of this experience.

Hannah then resumed her story on the next tape. When she decided to leave the party that night, Jenny Kurtz, one of the guests at the party, approached her and offered her a ride home. Jenny, who refused to admit she was drunk, hit the stop sign, resulting in a deadly accident the next day. News spread that an old man had died at the location where Jenny hit the stop sign that night. Hannah saw the accident as contributing to her feelings of overwhelm and depression.

The most tragic thing was when Hannah was raped by Bryce, a school friend who Hannah told about in the sixth side B cassette. This incident so damaged her mental health that it made Hannah start to think about committing suicide.

In the last tape, Hannah revealed that she tried to seek help from a school counselor, Mr. Porter, but the conversations didn't provide the support she needed. Finally, Hannah decided to end her life. She left behind tapes explaining thirteen reasons why she made that decision.

After Clay heard all the tapes left behind by Hannah Baker, he was devastated and shaken by the experience. Clay feels very guilty and regretful at the end of the story because he was unable to avoid the events that led Hannah to make the tragic decision to take her life. Clay is angry and frustrated with everyone in Hannah's life, including himself. Clay feels very guilty and regretful at the end of the story because he was unable to avoid the events that led Hannah to make the tragic decision to take her life.