Discuss Skye’s role in the story. Compare and contrast her to Hannah. What do you think Clay was hoping Mr. Porter would say to Hannah? Do you agree that these are her only options? What do you think Clay says to Skye when he catches up with her in the hallway? How is it relevant that Clay hears Skye utter these words? How do you imagine their experiences to be different? How do you think Skye feels when she hears Clay’s final words? How do you think Clay is changed by listening to Hannah’s tapes? Do you think he would have asked Jay the same thirteen questions after reading the novel when these same words are uttered under different circumstances. How do you think Clay says to Skye when he catches up with her in the hallway? How is it relevant that Clay hears Skye utter these words? How do you imagine their experiences to be different? How do you think Skye feels when she hears Clay’s final words? How do you think Clay is changed by listening to Hannah’s tapes? Do you think he would have asked Jay the same thirteen questions after reading the novel when these same words are uttered under different circumstances.

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
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Ages 12 up • Grades 7 up
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Claylessonreturns homefrom schooltofindamysteriousboxwith hisnameonitlying 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 heartbreaking story of suicide, desperation—and ultimately—hope that will deeply affect teen readers.

Eerie, beautiful, and devastating.
Hannah mentions reputations and their consequences repeatedly. 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?

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

—Ellen Hopkins, author of the New York Times bestsellers Crank, Identical, and Tricks

“Thirteen Reasons Why is a mystery, esopyle, 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


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