

Background Information for Library Materials in Review

Book Title: <i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>	Synopsis When high school student Clay Jenkins receives a box in the mail containing thirteen cassette tapes recorded by his classmate Hannah, who committed suicide, he spends a bewildering and heartbreaking night crisscrossing their town, listening to Hannah's voice recounting the events leading up to her death. <i>Source: Novelist Plus - accessed via SCDiscus</i>
Book Author Asher, Jay	
Copyright Year: 2007	

Professional Reviews of *Thirteen Reasons Why*

Source: Follett Titlewave

Booklist (September 1, 2007 (Vol. 104, No. 1))

Grades 8-11. When Clay Jensen plays the cassette tapes he received in a mysterious package, he's surprised to hear the voice of dead classmate Hannah Baker. He's one of 13 people who receive Hannah's story, which details the circumstances that led to her suicide. Clay spends the rest of the day and long into the night listening to Hannah's voice and going to the locations she wants him to visit. The text alternates, sometimes quickly, between Hannah's voice (italicized) and Clay's thoughts as he listens to her words, which illuminate betrayals and secrets that demonstrate the consequences of even small actions. Hannah, herself, is not free from guilt, her own inaction having played a part in an accidental auto death and a rape. The message about how we treat one another, although sometimes heavy, makes for compelling reading. Give this to fans of Gail Giles psychological thrillers.

Kirkus Reviews starred (September 1, 2007)

"Everything affects everything," declares Hannah Baker, who killed herself two weeks ago. After her death, Clay Jensen--who had a crush on Hannah--finds seven cassette tapes in a brown paper package on his doorstep. Listening to the tapes, Hannah chronicles her downward spiral and the 13 people who led her to make this horrific choice. Evincing the subtle--and not so subtle--cruelties of teen life, from rumors, to reputations, to rape, Hannah explains to her listeners that, "in the end, everything matters." Most of the novel quite literally takes place in Clay's head, as he listens to Hannah's voice pounding in his ears through his headphones, creating a very intimate feel for the reader as Hannah explains herself. Her pain is gut-wrenchingly palpable, and the reader is thrust face-first into a world where everything is related, an intricate yet brutal tapestry of events, people and places. Asher has created an entrancing character study and a riveting look into the psyche of someone who would make this unfortunate choice. A brilliant and mesmerizing debut from a gifted new author. (Fiction. YA)

Publishers Weekly (October 8, 2007)

This uncommonly polished debut opens on a riveting scenario: 13 teenagers in a small town have each been designated to listen, in secret, to a box of audiotapes recorded by their classmate Hannah and mailed on the very day she commits suicide. "I'm about to tell you the story of my life," she says. "More specifically, why my life ended. And if you're listening to these tapes, you're one of the reasons why." Clay, the narrator, receives the tapes a few weeks after the suicide (each listener must send the box to the next, and Hannah has built in a plan to make sure her posthumous directions are followed), and his initial shock turns to horror as he hears the dead girl implicate his friends and acquaintances in various acts of callousness, cruelty or crime.

Asher expertly paces the narrative, splicing Hannah's tale with Clay's mounting anxiety and fear. Just what has he done? Readers won't be able to pull themselves away until that question gets answered-no matter that the premise is contrived and the plot details can be implausible. The author gets all the characters right, from the popular girl who wants to insure her status to the boy who rapes an unconscious girl at a party where the liquor flows too freely, and the veneer of authenticity suffices to hide the story's flaws. Asher knows how to entertain an audience; this book will leave readers eager to see what he does next. Ages 13-up. (Oct.) Copyright 2007 Reed Business Information.

School Library Journal (November 1, 2007)

Gr 7 Up-High school senior Clay Jensen receives seven audiotapes in the mail. They contain the story of why Hannah Baker, a girl he adored, committed suicide. Each side is devoted to a person in her life and a reason for her death. Clay also has a map of places featured on the recordings. He spends a torturous night listening and wandering, unearthing the depth and causes of Hannah's unhappiness. His torment is private-how did he hurt a girl he treasured from afar-and empathic-her hurts and betrayals tear him apart. Clay's pain is palpable and exquisitely drawn in gripping, casually poetic prose. The complex and soulful characters expose astoundingly rich and singularly teenage inner lives, with emotions as raw as cut wrists. The mood is more serious than somber, and Clay's thoughtful synthesis of Hannah's increasingly explosive narrative saves the novel from melodrama. In fact, Hannah's and Clay's narratives are woven together so seamlessly that the characters appear to converse naturally from opposite sides of mortality. Compounded, the tapes build the plot in increasingly tense increments-Hannah's story is a freight train of despair and suspense that picks up speed as it moves to her final undoing. Like the protagonist in John Green's *Looking for Alaska* (Dutton, 2005), Hannah is an animate ghost; Clay's bereaved voice bears witness to her tragedy. The episodic structure is nicely suited to reluctant readers, but the breakneck pace and dizzying emotion are the true source of this novel's irresistible readability at all levels.-Johanna Lewis, New York Public Library Copyright 2007 Reed Business Information.

Awards/Distinctions Awarded to *Thirteen Reasons Why*

Source: NovelistPlus; Author's Website

Association of Booksellers for Children - Best Books
Book Sense Pick - Winter
Borders Original Voices Finalist
Barnes and Noble Top Ten Best for Teens
Chicago Public Library Best Books
International Reading Association - Young Adults' Choices
Kirkus Reviews Editor's Choice
South Carolina Young Adult Book Award Winner: 2010
YALSA Best Books for Young Adults: 2008
YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers: Fiction: 2008
YALSA Selected Audiobooks for Young Adults