

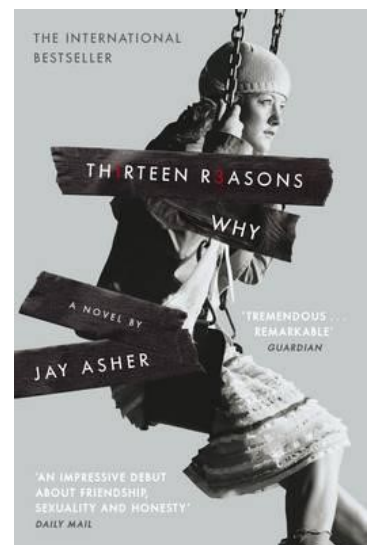
# Thirteen Reasons Why

Jay Asher

*“I was mainly afraid of writing a book no one wanted to read because it was too depressing. Since there was no way to get around the seriousness of the issues (nor did I want to), I wrote it as if writing a suspense novel... to hopefully compel people to read through to the end.”*

Jay Asher

[<http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/2008/02/author-interview-jay-asher-on-thirteen.html>]



## Contents:

Introduction	1
Brief Author Biography	2
A Teen Review of the book @ The Guardian	3
10th anniversary of the book	4-5
Notes	6

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## Brief Author Biography



Jay Asher is an American writer of contemporary novels for teens. He was born in Arcadia, California, and grew up with a family that encouraged him to pursue his many interests—from guitar playing to writing. He attended Cuesta Community College after graduating from San Luis Obispo High School. It was here where he wrote his first two children's books for a class called Children's Literature Appreciation.

Deciding he wanted to become an elementary school teacher, he transferred to California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. But he left his senior year in order to pursue his career as a serious writer. In 2002 he married his wife

Joan Marie. Those early years found him working in various establishments, including a shoe store, libraries, and bookstores. Many of his work experiences had an impact on some aspect of his writing.

Asher's first novel, *Thirteen Reasons Why*, became a 2007 New York Times best-selling young-adult fiction novel. It won several awards and received five stars from Teen Book Review, as well as high praise from fellow authors, including Ellen Hopkins, Sherman Alexie, and Chris Crutcher, and Gordon Korman.

His second novel *The Future of Us* was co-written by Carolyn Mackler and published in 2011. He has also written

several picture books and middle school humor novels.

Asher is a fan of the TV series *My So-Called Life* and cites it as a major influence on his work.

[<http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/10018-thirteen-reasons-why-asher>]

## A Teen Review of the book @The Guardian

I go from reading about one Hannah (in *Trouble* by Non Pratt) straight into another. This time, it's a bit different from a teenage pregnancy and this time, it's a teenage suicide. Cheerful books I read. However, whilst suicide isn't the cheeriest of topics, this is probably one of the most inventively written books I've read.

Clay Jensen receives a parcel one day from Hannah Baker, who two weeks earlier, committed suicide. Inside are several tapes, each with recordings of the thirteen reasons why she killed herself. I tell a lie, the parcel has actually been sent from someone different who is featured on the tapes. He steals a Walkman and spends the night trailing across the city listening to these tapes. The only reason he got the tapes? Because he's one of the reasons Hannah killed herself.

Whilst reading this book, I picked up scents of a few other books that I couldn't help but compare *Thirteen Reasons Why* to. *Paper Towns* by John Green was one of the first, as he trails around after this girl in the many different

places she's marked and the clues she's left. Weirdly, I also find myself comparing this book to *A Song For Ella Grey*. Tragedy is just the one word reason as to why I'm doing that. Fangirls of either of them, rejoice!

I was a bit put off by the layout of this book. The idea of using symbols to mark where the tapes are playing or not is good, and the use of the cassette numbers and Side A or B to mark chapters is also pretty nice, but the fact that whatever Hannah is saying is marked in italics really puts me off as well. It makes it harder to follow, as Clay is also providing his own commentary.

However, in the '13 Questions' interview at the end, the author, Jay Asher, said that he got the idea for this book from the multimedia guides you get in museums. He found it strange that something non-present knew what they were talking about and it correlated to what you were looking at. Why did I tell you that? Because I think that's the twist that makes this book what it is. If it were just a book about why a girl

committed suicide, then this book probably wouldn't have been as interesting as it is. But it's the element where Hannah, even though she's dead throughout the entire storyline, is still present, that makes *Thirteen Reasons Why* as mystifying as it is.

I leave this review with saying well done to Jay Asher. I really enjoyed this book and it's a really well written novel. It was only whilst searching for this book on Google that I found out that Jay Asher collaborated with Carolyn Mackler to write *The Future Of Us*.

*Thirteen Reasons Why* isn't a love story. It's a story in its own little dimension. And that's something that's hard to achieve. And as for a movie adaptation? Universal had them back in 2011, said Selena Gomez was to play Hannah and that's all we've heard. Keep your eyes peeled, fangirls...

[<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2014/dec/27/review-thirteen-reasons-why-jay-asher>]

## 10th anniversary of the book

***It's been ten years since we first published *Thirteen Reasons Why*, and to celebrate we're releasing a 10th Anniversary edition with exclusive content including the never-before-seen original ending in which Hannah Baker lives.***

*Got your attention? Need to know more ASAP? So did we! Luckily, we got to ask Jay Asher ten burning questions we had about this momentous publication, the *Thirteen Reasons Why* Netflix series, and more:*

**Why did you decide to release the original ending of *Thirteen Reasons Why*?**

Since the book came out, readers have asked if I ever considered—somehow—keeping Hannah alive at the end of the novel. I get a great reaction when I tell them that's precisely how it originally ended. Their jaws drop! Then I explain the particulars of how it unfolded, and why it needed to change. So, since I'd already been talking about it, it felt appropriate to finally share that chapter for the 10th anniversary edition.

**What made you change the**

**ending in the first place?**

To start, I'm not exactly sure what my thought process was behind the original ending. I had a relative who survived a suicide attempt when she was a junior in high school, which years later inspired the novel. So maybe that's why my initial thought was to have Hannah's character also survive. Or maybe I thought it was a creative twist that no one would see coming, allowing me to give all of the characters a second chance. Whatever the reasoning, it felt false for this particular story and for the seriousness of the issue. If someone goes through with a suicide, there are no second chances for anyone involved.

**When you were writing *Thirteen Reasons Why*, did you want the book to have a particular message to teens?**

The main thing I wanted to say, which is more of a reminder, is that we do affect each other. When we do or say things, we can never know exactly how another person is going to take it because we don't know what they've already dealt with. But that doesn't apply only to the bad things we do or say. We

also don't know how massive a simple kind word or action can be to someone.

**How do you think one ending versus another affects the message of the novel?**

What I wanted to say wouldn't have changed, but the original ending would have let readers off the hook from needing to consider my message. They may have been following my message from the beginning, but when they finished that last chapter they would have let out a sigh of relief that everything could potentially be righted. But with suicide there are no second chances, and with the final ending, that isn't an option to even consider. But readers are shown that people can change for the better, even after a tragedy, and that was very important to me.

**What do you hope or think *Thirteen Reasons Why* fans will think of this ending?**

As a reader myself, I'm always curious about the thought processes behind what other authors do, from the big decisions down to things like

name selection. So I hope it's interesting for them to read, and I think they'll understand why the story needed to end the way it does.

**How does it feel to be coming up on the 10th anniversary of the book?**

I could not have imagined the book would be where it is ten years later. Honestly, I didn't think the book would be a great commercial success (though I didn't tell my publisher that). I thought a few people would really love it, but I just had no idea it would resonate with such a large audience. It's still hard for me to put it all into focus.

**How do you feel about the overwhelmingly positive teen response to the book over the last ten years?**

I have two opposing feelings about that. Part of that response, I recognize, comes from teens thankful that my book addresses issues that our society has a hard time discussing. And because it's hard to discuss, sometimes we don't, which is dangerous. So the necessity of books like this means the positive response

will always come with a twinge of sadness. But to hear about communities using my book to open discussions, or when someone reads it and finally feels understood, that's such a heartwarming honor. When the positive remark is about the writing or storytelling alone, that I can find pure joy in!

**What role has *Thirteen Reasons Why* played in the bullying prevention movement?**

There have been so many people who said the book inspired them to start an anti-bullying group at their school, or provide a Safe Space, or just adjust how they treat others. On a larger scale, a lot of schools and communities have been using my book as one means of opening up a discussion.

**What are you most looking forward to about the upcoming Netflix series?**

I'm most excited for my readers—that they'll get to experience this story in a whole new way! The cast and crew are phenomenal, personally and professionally,

and their love for the story will be evident throughout each episode. Yes, I am excited that the story will be shared with people who've never read the book, but I'm most excited for my readers.

**What would you tell new readers to *Thirteen Reasons Why*?**

This is your book. Don't be concerned with what anyone else says about it—good or bad. Just like with any book, it's your experience with these characters that matters.

[\[http://www.penguinteen.com/thirteen-reasons-why-anniversary/\]](http://www.penguinteen.com/thirteen-reasons-why-anniversary/)

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**[barcelonabookclub.wordpress.com](http://barcelonabookclub.wordpress.com)**

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