**Thirteen Reasons Why**

**by Jay Asher**

On our first reading lesson I managed to read 23 pages of a book named *Thirteen Reasons Why* written by Jay Asher. It has won several awards and has received five stars from Teen Book Review.

It starts with a prologue. An unnamed narrator is mailing a package because the day before, he got that package in the mail, and his task is to send it to the next person "on Hannah Baker's list". He has a horrible headache. He pays the postage and drinks his coffee. The coffee is not good because it is already cold, but he needs something to wake him up. The clerk tells him that the package will get there tomorrow or the next day. Then the narrator is walking to school. The closer he gets to school, the worse his head hurts. He feels terrible and just wants to pass out somewhere. If he goes to school, he'll have to see Mr. Porter, the last person who will get Hannah Baker's package. And if he goes to school, he will have to see Hannah Baker's empty desk.

Later, I learned that narrator's name is Clay Jensen. He gets home from school and finds a package with his name on it. He is excited so he opens it and finds seven audio cassette tapes. Both sides of each cassette are numbered with blue nail polish. The numbers go up to thirteen. Clay has no idea who would send him tapes. He wonders how he will play them, because who has cassette recorder nowadays… Then he remembers that his dad has an old stereo with a tape deck in the garage, so he goes there to listen to the first tape.

**Next chapter is called Cassette 1: Side A**

He presses play and the first tape starts with: "Hello, boys and girls. Hannah Baker here. Live and in stereo." Clay is shocked, because Hannah killed herself. Then in this tape Hannah says that these tapes will explain why she's dead and that the people listening to the tapes are the reasons why she did it. Hannah says she has two rules. The first rule is to listen to the tapes. The second rule is, after listening, to send these tapes to the next person on the list. Then Hannah says that somebody else has a copy of the tapes and if anybody breaks the rules and doesn't send the tapes to the next person on the list, the tapes will be published and whole city will hear them. Clay is sick to his stomach. He is scared and he doesn’t understand what is going on. He doesn’t know why he is on the list. He says he didn’t do anything to her. Also he didn't know Hannah very well before she died. They were just going to the same school. But he'd wanted to know her better. They had worked at the movie theatre together last summer, and one time, they kissed at a party. But that’s all.

The first tape is about Justin Foley. Hannah says that Justin betrayed her and he probably isn't even aware of it.

Justin was Hannah's friend Kat's boyfriend. When Kat moved away at the end of that summer, Hannah started liking Justin. Eventually, he asked for her number and she gave it to him. He called the same night and they made plans to meet at Eisenhower Park.

When Hannah first moved to town, there were two other new kids, Alex Standall and Jessica Davis. Hannah and Jessica met through a guidance counselor, Miss Antilly, who switched schools later that year.

Clay remembers that she was replaced by Mr. Porter. Hannah says that the change in guidance counselors was "very unfortunate". And because of that sentence Clay wonders whether Mr. Porter was also a reason why Hannah killed herself. Clay thinks that Mr. Porter was acting very suspicious when he was asking about Hannah the day she killed herself (he asked that before everyone knew that she is dead). *In my opinion Clay has a right to think that, because what teacher would just ask and care about a student outside working hours?*

The tape continues. When Miss Antilly was at school, she tried to match up Hannah with Jessica. She wanted them to be friends. Hannah and Jessica were both embarrassed, but after the meeting they hang out. *I think it was very nice of Miss Antilly that she cared and that she wanted them to make friends. Because it is hard when you are new and you don’t have anybody.*

That same afternoon, Hannah and Jessica took the bus to a coffee shop. There they met Alex. They noticed him watching them and Jessica asked him which one of the girls he was looking at. He said he was new, too, and just wanted to hang out. Then Hannah mentions that Alex and Jessica weren't really her friends. They were just hanging out with each other until they made real friends. *From my perspective it was kind of mean of Hannah to say that. But probably, it was true.*

Alex was the first one of them to make real friends. He stopped hanging out with them and without him, Jessica and Hannah just didn't have much to talk about anymore.

Then one day Jessica told Hannah to meet her at Monet's. When Hannah got there, Jessica accused her of stealing Alex from her. Hannah denied it but Jessica said she had heard all the rumours about Hannah (some people where spreading rumours about Hannah that she sleeps with every boy). Hannah said that she can take the blame for the breakup if that's what Jessica wanted to hear, but the rumours weren't true.

Then Jessica smacked and scratched Hannah over the eye. Her nail broke off and Hannah had a scar.

Hannah says that Jessica's scratch is a knife in her back because she would rather believe some made-up rumour than what was true. *I think that that’s the problem nowadays because people spread false information and especially about girls being some kind of sinners. Then people believe these rumours and it can hurt those girls very much.*

Then the tape continues and Hannah wants to know if Jessica went to her funeral. Clay says that Jessica couldn't have gone to Hannah's funeral, because there hasn’t been any funeral yet.

*And that's the end of the tape. And in my opinion the lesson we can learn from this chapter is not to believe rumours and try to get to know the people before you make assumptions about them.*

to be continued

**Summary about chapter called Cassette 3: Side B**

In this tape Hannah talks about Valentine's Day.

Hannah says the cheerleaders had put on a fundraiser for the cheer camp before Valentine's Day. For five dollars students could get a list with five phone numbers of people at school who were a good match for them. All they needed to do was to fill out a survey describing themselves and their ideal partner. Hannah described one specific person as her ideal partner but unfortunately he didn’t end up on her list of matches.

While listening to this tape Clay remembers the list. He used the name Holden Caulfield (it was the main character from the book they were reading in school). He filled it out as if it was Holden. So his soul mates list was really strange. He considered the whole thing as a joke.

Clay knows Hannah would probably have ended up on his list if he had filled out his survey as himself. He wonders if he would be brave enough to call her. *In my opinion Hannah would surely end up on his list because they are very similar characters and they had common opinions.*

Clay really liked Hannah. He applied for the job at the movie theatre just because Hannah worked there. But Clay was too afraid to have a normal conversation with her.

When the day of the results came Hannah went to the office and paid five bucks. A cheerleader gave her the list on which was name Marcus Cooley. Hannah liked him because he was funny and really cute. When Hannah and the cheerleader talked about the list, Marcus called Hannah on her mobile phone. He said he was watching her. She looked up and saw him through the glass. Marcus asked her out, and they planned to meet at Rosie's after school.

The cheerleader was very excited about this success story, and wanted to know if she could tell the other cheerleaders. Hannah said she can but she has to wait until tomorrow, in case it didn't work out. *Hannah was careful and she didn’t want to be naïve like she was with Courtney.*

Hannah says she doesn’t want to say the cheerleader's name, because she was super sweet to her and she was not responsible for what happened next with Marcus. Clay thinks that the cheerleader is Jenny Kurtz because she seemed upset when she heard that Hannah had killed herself. Hannah didn't trust the people Marcus hung out with. But he, himself wasn’t that bad. So she went to Rosie's to give Marcus a chance.

But that was probably wrong choice because Hannah waited at Rosie's for Marcus for half an hour. She felt very awkward, because she was sitting there all alone. She wanted to leave but then Marcus showed up. He said he thought Hannah was probably kidding about the date, but he decided to show up just in case. He took her to a booth. Straight away, he put his hand on her knee and started moving it up her leg. She wanted him to stop but he didn’t so she pushed him out of the booth. He fell on the floor and then left. *Poor Hannah, she didn’t deserve this kind of embarrassment. Marcus proved to me that he is rude and naughty guy.*

Meanwhile is Clay on his way to Rosie's and he passes the movie theatre where he and Hannah worked together. He wishes he had reached out to her. The theatre is closed so Clay stands outside and he is remembering the night Bryce Walker came there with a girl. The girl left the before the film was over and she looked like she was crying.

Bryce came out when the movie ended and talked to Hannah for a long time. She was laughing and smiling. It looked like she enjoyed and liked spending time with him.

When Bryce finally left, Clay tried to talk to Hannah about him. But Hannah said she knew what kind of a guy Bryce was and that he didn’t need to watch out for her. Now Clay feels like he should have watched out for her, after all. He tried, but she didn’t let him in. *Maybe If Clay was braver, Hannah would have lived today.*

**Cassette 4: Side A**

Hannah starts this tape by talking about everyone's favourite required class called Peer Communications. When things at school got worse for Hannah, this class became her "safe space". Unlike in other classes, the teacher of this class called Mrs. Bradley, didn't let anyone bully anyone else. They could talk about anything they wanted, even touchy subjects.

Mrs. Bradley developed a system of motivation notes for the students to send each other anonymously. Students could leave classmates notes in their paper bags which were placed in slots. Hannah says that nobody ever put rude or mean notes in the bags. So she is curious why Zach Dempsey, the person this tape is about, decided to be mean.

That day at Rosie's (where Hannah met Marcus on Valentine's Day) Zach came over and sat next to Hannah. He was nice and he said he was sorry about Marcus. But Hannah couldn't talk to him. She didn’t have a reason to trust him. She didn’t want to be let down by another person. At that moment she thought about suicide for the first time.

After Hannah rejected Zach she figured out that he was stealing her notes of encouragement as revenge.

She figured it out when she cut off most of her long hair because she thought somebody would write her a note about it because it was such a drastic change, but no note came. So she decided to write herself a note to see if Zach is really stealing her notes. The next day her bag was empty. So now she was completely sure. She wanted Zach to understand that she needed those notes. So she placed another note in her bag. Then she waited in the hallway to watch.

Soon, Zach tried to take the note but it fell. He picked it back up and rushed out of the classroom. In the note Hannah was confronting Zach about taking her notes, and telling him how much she needed them. She watched him read it and he just turned away. Then she started screaming at him, asking him why he did it*.* Clay actually remembers that day because everybody was talking about how Hannah had freaked out for no reason in the hallway. *She had strong reason but they just didn’t know about it.*

Then Hannah says on the tape that her home life wasn't so great at that time either. Because there was going to be a new shop built and her parents thought that opening a new mall would destroy their shoe store business. Hannah's mother didn't even notice her haircut.

Then Hannah decided to put an anonymous note in Mrs. Bradley's bag, saying she was thinking about suicide.

Mrs. Bradley read the note to the class and opened the discussion. The class agreed that when they don’t know who wrote it or why, they cannot help the person. Someone even said that whoever wrote the note just wants attention.

On the tape, Hannah admits that maybe they were right. Maybe she just wanted people to tell her not to do it. *In my opinion that’s understandable. She didn’t have anyone to talk to and even if she had she wouldn’t tell it to anyone because she was afraid that another person will let her down. She was completely lost and she just needed at least one reason not to do it, or one person that she could talk to without being worried.*

**Cassette 4: Side B**

Hannah likes reading poems and trying to decode their deeper meanings. Hannah says that she was trying to use poetry as therapy for a while. She could write down whatever feelings she felt and make a poem out of them.

Later Hannah felt trapped inside herself and she didn’t want to think about her emotions that much so she decided to stop writing poetry for a while.

But after a few weeks she started missing it so she signed up for a poetry class. Most of the students in this class were unhappy women who were writing unhappy and angry poems.

Fortunately there was another high school student in the class. His name is Ryan Shaver, editor of a school paper. Hannah said that she is sure he will be a famous poet one day and that his poems would be taught in schools. And this tape is about him.

While Clay is listening he realizes that a certain poem printed in the school paper must have been written by Hannah. It was even a topic in their English class.

The school paper called the Gazette is a collection of things that Ryan found around campus (notes from notebooks, love letters, photos and so on). But with Hannah it was different because he didn’t find her poem he literally stole it from her.

It happened like this: After a few weeks of poetry class, Hannah and Ryan started reading some of their poems to each other. They even traded notebooks. Ryan was interested in one of Hannah's poems. He analysed this poem and showed her another possible meaning.

Hannah wants to know why Ryan stole her poem and published it in the school paper even when he knew that she hasn’t been alright for some time. Clay remembers that everybody was making fun of that poem.

*This may not sound like such a huge deal but it is horrible when you add it on top of everything else that happened to her.* *Another person let her down and betrayed her.*

**Cassette 5: Side A**

Clay finds out that Tony has the second set of the tape and he is curious why him. Tony says he'll explain after Clay listens to the next one, which is finally going to be about Clay.

Hannah says that she wanted to know Clay better because no one ever said anything bad about him.

Hannah says she's sure her listeners think that she will reveal something bad about Clay. But that is not true. Clay's name does not belong on this list, he is just a part of her story, but not in the same way as the others. He did not do anything bad to her.

One night when Hannah was grounded was a party. She heard that Clay would be there so she snuck out.

When she walked to the party she felt hope for the first time. She thought something good would happen. She wanted to find Clay and have a normal conversation with him. Fortunately Clay wanted to talk to her as well.

They went into the living room and talked for a long time and had a really good conversation.

After a while they wanted to find a quiet place to talk. So they went to a bedroom upstairs. Hannah decided to kiss Clay even though she was very scared because she did not want to be hurt again. Fortunately they both liked the kiss.

But after a while she started thinking about Justin and how he had ruined their kiss, so she freaked out and told Clay to stop. She started shouting at him and then he left the room.

Then Hannah started to cry. She was not feeling good so she lay down on the floor.

That night she started making this list. She started to realize what everyone did to her.

At the end of this chapter Clay tells Tony that he really misses Hannah.

**Chapter 5 side B**

Clay asks Tony if he blames him for Hannah's death. Tony says that he doesn’t.

Tony promises Clay that he will tell him why he has the second set of tapes.

On the recording, Hannah continues the story of the party. After Clay left, the couple from the couch (Justin and Jessica) came into the bedroom and Hannah was still on the floor. Jessica was really drunk so Justin left the room. Hannah could see his shoes under the door and he seemed to be guarding the door while Jessica was inside.

Hannah wanted to leave the room, but then she noticed that another set of shoes was coming. The door opened. It was Justin's friend. He was trying to convince Justin to let him in the room. He wanted to rape Jessica while she was passed out.

At first Justin said no because he liked Jessica and he didn’t want her to be hurt. But his friend was still trying to convince him. Then unfortunately Justin changed his mind and let his friend in.

Hannah was scared and she hid in the closet. The music was playing loud throughout the whole house.

While listening, Clay realizes who the friend must be. Bryce Walker.

Back to the tape, Hannah says that she heard him getting on the bed and raping the drunken girl. Hannah blames herself because she could have stopped it.

When Clay heard that part of the recording he got off the car and started vomiting. *No wonder… What happened that night was really horrible.*

When the guy finally left the room, Hannah ran down the hall and saw Justin sitting on a bed by himself. They stared at each other but they didn’t say anything.

Hannah wonders if Justin is still friends with that guy. She wants Justin to know that even though neither of them raped the girl, it's still their fault. And that's the end of the tape.