

# You can't stop the future. You can't rewind the past. The only way to learn the secret... is to press play. Read an extract from **Jay Asher's** stunning novel **Thirteen Reasons Why**

image: <https://www.penguin.co.uk/content/dam/prh-consumer/penguin/misc/divider-3cm.png>

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YESTERDAY, ONE HOUR AFTER SCHOOL

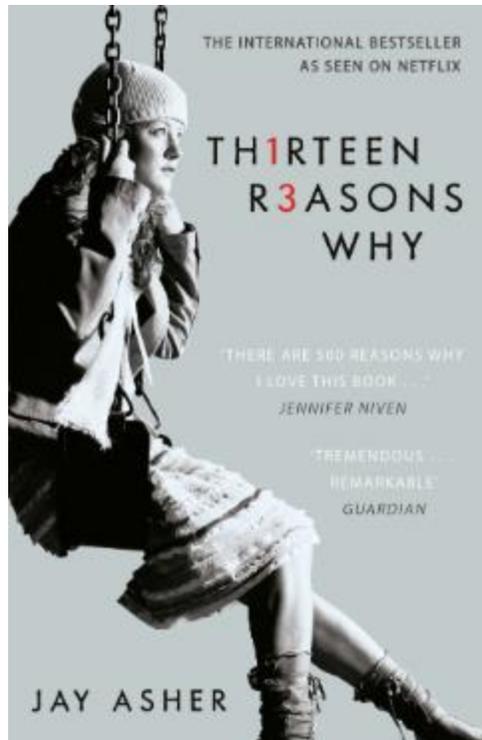
A shoebox-sized package is propped against the front door at an angle. Our front door has a tiny slot to shove mail through, but anything thicker than a bar of soap gets left outside. A hurried scribble on the wrapping addresses the package to Clay Jensen, so I pick it up and head inside.

I take the package into the kitchen and set it on the counter. I slide open the junk drawer and pull out a pair of scissors. Then I run a scissor blade around the package and lift off its top. Inside the shoebox is a rolled-up tube of bubble-wrap. I unroll that and discover seven loose audiotapes.

Each tape has a dark blue number painted in the upper right-hand corner, possibly with nail polish. Each side has its own number. One and two on the first tape, three and four on the next, five and six, and so on. The last tape has a thirteen on one side, but nothing on the back.

image:

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/content/dam/catalogue/pim/editions/291/9780141328294/cover.jpg.rendition.242.374.png>



Who would send me a shoebox full of audiotapes? No one listens to tapes anymore. Do I even have a way to play them?

The garage! The stereo on the workbench. My dad bought it at a yard sale for almost nothing. It's old, so he doesn't care if it gets coated with sawdust or splattered with paint. And best of all, it plays tapes.

I drag a stool in front of the workbench, drop my backpack to the floor, then sit down. I press Eject on the player. A plastic door eases open and I slide in the first tape.

Hello, boys and girls. Hannah Baker here. Live and in stereo.

I don't believe it.

No return engagements. No encore. And this time, absolutely no requests.

No, I can't believe it. Hannah Baker killed herself.

I hope you're ready, because I'm about to tell you the story of my life. More specifically, why my life ended. And if you're listening to these tapes, you're one of the reasons why.

What? No!

I'm not saying which tape brings you into the story. But fear not, if you received this lovely little box, your name will pop up . . . I promise.

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image: <https://www.penguin.co.uk/content/dam/prh-consumer/penguin/promos/promo-images/Snippet%20stock%20images/quotation.jpg>



**The rules are pretty simple. There are only two.  
Rule number one: You listen. Number two:  
You pass it on**

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CASSETTE 1: SIDE A

Now, why would a dead girl lie?

Hey! That sounds like a joke. Why would a dead girl lie?

Answer: Because she can't stand up.

Is this some kind of twisted suicide note?

Go ahead. Laugh.

Oh well. I thought it was funny.

Before Hannah died, she recorded a bunch of tapes.

Why?

The rules are pretty simple. There are only two. Rule number one: You listen. Number two: You pass it on.

Hopefully, neither one will be easy for you.

“What’s that you’re playing?”

“Mom!”

I scramble for the stereo, hitting several buttons all at once.

“Mom, you scared me,” I say. “It’s nothing. A school project.”

My go-to answer for anything. Staying out late? School project. Need extra money? School project. And now, the tapes of a girl. A girl who, two weeks ago, swallowed a handful of pills.

School project.

“Can I listen?” she asks.

“It’s not mine,” I say. I scrape the toe of my shoe against the concrete floor. “I’m helping a friend. It’s for history. It’s boring.”

“Well, that’s nice of you,” she says. She leans over my shoulder and lifts a dusty rag, one of my old cloth diapers, to remove a tape measure hidden underneath. Then she kisses my forehead. “I’ll leave you in peace.”

I wait till the door clicks shut, then I place a finger over the Play button. My fingers, my hands, my arms, my neck, everything feels hollow. Not enough strength to press a single button on a stereo.

I pick up the cloth diaper and drape it over the shoebox to hide it from my eyes. I wish I’d never seen that box or the seven tapes inside it. Hitting Play that first time was easy. A piece of cake. I had no idea what I was about to hear. But this time, it’s one of the most frightening things I’ve ever done.

I turn the volume down and press Play.

If you're affected by any of the issues raised in ***Thirteen Reasons Why***, click here for a list of [UK-based support organisations](#) that can help.

Read more at <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/find-your-next-read/extracts/2017/may/13-reasons-why-by-jay-asher/#pUGZmL5ZPKXe6AAq.99>