

**2020 Bookman Book Report Contest**  
**Fly into Space Between Reading and Imagination!**

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書籍基本資料	
英文書名	漢娜的遺言 / <i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>
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心得分享		
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<p>The Blurred Line between the Victim and the Assailants</p> <p>In <i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i>, author Jay Asher stresses the ripple effects of emotional bullying surrounding the themes of suicide, friends, and love. Hannah Baker's inner self starts conflicting between the decision to live or die. The animosity and misunderstandings between the characters cause her to commit a suicide. In the end, she leaves thirteen tapes behind, stating why she chose to end her own life. However, her death does not necessarily make her an absolute victim, the tapes she left behind antagonize others' daily routines with privacy exposure and leave them without any chances to justify their version of the truths. The novel raises a poignant perspective, triggering the reader to question who the true assailant and the real victim may be, under all the circumstances.</p> <p>High school students may often choose to unsee insignificant mean behaviors; these</p>		

actions, when accumulated, can form a devastating blow to one's mental wellbeing. In *Thirteen Reasons Why*, the first incident that startles Hannah is the distrust and betrayal of her friends. For teenagers, friends are essential and can affect their self-esteem immensely. Friends are one of the main psychological supports of teenagers; however, such support is extinguished early on in Hannah's life. Instead, what adds on to her emotional baggage are the verbal insults from her friends and the cruel, cold glances from the others.

In desperate situations, especially when confronted with such upheavals in personal life, family would usually serve as an essential emotional crutch for bullied teenagers, but Hannah's family's purported ignorance also snuffs her spirit. With so little hope left, the sexual assault from the boys in her school destroys any further purpose and meaning for Hannah to continue living. The physical intrusion that happens to Hannah traumatizes her and causes a deep loss of self-worth. When she declares that "I'm done," the anguish and emptiness in her soul are revealed in all their cutting presence. If she had had a chance to receive a warm hug or a simple smile, she might have been motivated to live on in this cruel world. She might have been seeking only the faintest glimmer of hope to cling onto as a purpose to live. But alas, this does not come to pass.

Readers may sympathize with Hannah's encounter and consider her as a victim; however, distinguishing between assailants and victims can border on being ambiguous with regards to emotional bullying in a high school setting. From a different perspective, Hannah does not seem like an absolute victim. She pulls others into the drama. The tapes Hannah leaves behind are like an unstoppable fire, revealing people's privacy and causing numerous collateral damages. The tables are turned when the assailants become the victims. Forced to live in shame, the perpetrators in turn lose all opportunities to speak for themselves. When people condemn the assailants, the victimized feelings and perspective of the assailants may go unexplored. When people empathize with victims, it is all too

common to forget their sins in the overarching web of sympathy. These common human mistakes ironically construct the role reversal, turning the assailants into actual victims and the victims into assailants. Hannah, who is sympathized as a victim, is the one who reduces her assailants' normal lives into ashes by accusing them responsible for her death.

There is no definite explanation to the question of who the real victim or assailant is. Suicidal death does not always mean victimization and does not always end the cycle of bullying. But as demonstrated in *Thirteen Reasons Why*, suicide may be a form of forceful counterattack that haunts other lives for posterity. Hannah's death helps her community witness the consequences of miserable social bullying, but meanwhile, also becomes a weapon that foments another wave of bullying. As the famous saying goes, "Everything is a double-edged sword;" it is impossible to establish a clear line between the assailant and the victim since the two roles intertwine together and have an effect on one another.

*Thirteen Reasons Why* leaves readers with an unsolved mystery, as well as plenty of space for imagination to construct their own version of reality within the book and Hannah's universe.