

To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han

SESSION #4 (CH. 19-24)—Summer 2026 ESL360 Book Club

This summer we are reading *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* by Jenny Han. The novel is about a teenage girl navigating first love, family, and the slow process of figuring out who she is. Each week's discussion is also framed by a short passage from *The Laws of Human Nature* by Robert Greene.

Robert Greene is one of the most widely read authors in the world. His books have sold millions of copies and have been translated into dozens of languages. His book *The Laws of Human Nature*, published in 2018, became a number one New York Times bestseller immediately. The book draws on psychology, philosophy, history, and biography to identify eighteen patterns in human behavior that shape what we do, often without our awareness. Greene has a talent for taking difficult ideas from scientists and philosophers and making them clear and useful for everyday readers. The book is not a textbook. It reads more like a guide to understanding the people around you and the person you are still becoming.

You do not need to read Greene's book. Each week, one short passage is provided on your session sheet. Think of it as a camera lens. Jenny Han shows us a story. Greene provides a way of looking at it. The laws selected relate directly to what happens in the novel. Lara Jean is a teenager figuring out who she is and what she wants. The people around her illustrate, in real and recognizable ways, the very patterns Greene spent years studying. Reading the novel through Greene's lens makes the story richer and our discussions deeper and more interesting.

Reading Schedule

Session	Date	Chapters	Theme
1	June 3, 2026	Ch. 1–6	<i>The Law of Repression</i>
2	June 10, 2026	Ch. 7–12	<i>The Law of Irrationality</i>
3	June 17, 2026	Ch. 13–18	<i>The Law of Death Denial</i>
4	June 24, 2026	Ch. 19–24	<i>The Law of Shortsightedness</i>
5	July 1, 2026	Ch. 25–30	<i>The Law of Covetousness</i>
6	July 8, 2026	Ch. 31–36	<i>The Law of Compulsive Behavior</i>
7	July 15, 2026	Ch. 37–42	<i>The Law of Envy</i>
8	July 22, 2026	Ch. 43–48	<i>The Law of Role-Playing</i>
9	July 29, 2026	Ch. 49–54	<i>The Law of Conformity</i>
10	August 5, 2026	Ch. 55–60	<i>The Law of Aimlessness</i>



Your Weekly Assignment:

Before each session, read the assigned chapters and review the discussion questions on this sheet. Think about each question and jot down a few notes of your own thoughts in the space provided. You do not need to prepare a formal answer. You simply need to come ready to share your perspective. The more thinking you bring to the room, the richer our conversation will be.

SESSION 4: CHAPTERS 19–24 & THE LAW OF SHORTSIGHTEDNESS

Shortsightedness is the inability to think past the present moment. A shortsighted person focuses only on the most urgent, immediate problem and selects the nearest solution without thinking about what might happen next.

FROM THE NOVEL

"The way it happens is a strange sort of serendipity. A slow-motion train wreck. For something to go this colossally wrong, everything must intersect and collide at the exact right, or in this case, wrong, moment. If the bus driver hadn't had trouble backing out of the cul-de-sac, taking four extra minutes to get to school, I never would have run into Josh." Ch. 20

GREENE'S LAW

Robert Greene writes that human beings are naturally focused on the present moment. We react to what is happening right now. We respond to the most urgent problem, the most immediate fear, the quickest solution available. This is useful in a real emergency, but in everyday life it causes problems. When we focus only on the present, we make quick decisions that we later regret. We choose solutions that feel good immediately but create larger difficulties later. We also avoid uncomfortable truths. We tell ourselves that everything will probably work out, without making a real plan. Greene calls this shortsightedness. It is the inability to see far enough ahead to understand the full consequences of our choices.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Chapter 20, Jenny Han gives us three if sentences in a row—if the bus driver had not had trouble, if Josh's car had started, if Peter had not had to meet Ms. Wooten. Greene says shortsighted people focus only on the immediate crisis and grab the nearest solution. Looking at what Lara Jean does the moment she sees Josh at her locker, how does her response show exactly what Greene is describing?
2. In Chapter 19, Lara Jean wakes up with a plan to avoid Josh forever and tells herself her optimism will carry her through. Her mother always said optimism was her best quality. Chris calls it naivety. Margot rolls her eyes at it. Looking at what actually happens in these chapters, who is right, and is it possible for the same quality to be both a strength and a problem at the same time?
3. Greene says we tell ourselves things will probably work out without making a real plan. Can you think of a small, everyday situation where you noticed yourself doing this—choosing to believe it would be fine rather than actually thinking it through?
4. By the end of Chapter 24, the situation has completely escaped Lara Jean's control. Looking back at these chapters, at what moment do you think she has the clearest chance to stop and think, and what does she do instead?

SESSION 4: VOCABULARY

Chapters 19–24 & The Law of Shortsightedness



serendipity *n.* /ˌsɛr.ənˈdɪp.ɪ.ti/ sehr-un-DIP-ih-tee

Serendipity is the occurrence of pleasant or interesting events by chance, without being planned.

“The way it happens is a strange sort of serendipity.” Ch. 20



colossally *adv.* /kəˈlɔː.səl.i/ kuh-LAHS-uh-lee

Colossally means extremely or enormously. It is used to emphasize the great size or degree of something, often something negative.

“For something to go this colossally wrong, everything must intersect and collide at the exact right moment.” Ch. 20



shell-shocked *adj.* /ˈʃɛl.ʃɔːkt/ SHEL-shokt

If you are shell-shocked, you are very shocked or upset by something unpleasant that has happened, leaving you confused and unable to think clearly.

“He has this shell-shocked, confused expression on his face.” Ch. 20



momentous *adj.* /məˈmɛn.təs/ muh-MEN-tus

If you describe an event as momentous, you mean it is very important because of the effects it will have in the future.

“I should probably wait for Margot to come home before I make such a momentous decision.” Ch. 22



insufferable *adj.* /ɪnˈsʌf.ər.ə.bəl/ in-SUF-er-uh-bul

If you describe someone as insufferable, you mean their behavior makes them extremely unpleasant or irritating to be around.

“Ugh! He’s so insufferable.” Ch. 24

SESSION 4: GRAMMAR

Chapters 19–24 & The Law of Shortsightedness

The Third Conditional

We use the third conditional to talk about imaginary situations in the PAST, such as things that did NOT happen. We use it to imagine a different result, or to express regret.

Form:

If + had + past participle, would have + past participle

Note the negative form:

If X hadn't happened, Y wouldn't have happened.

This is the most common form for regret or a chain of unlucky events.

The clause order can be reversed — both are correct:

"If she hadn't mailed the letters, Josh wouldn't have known."

"Josh wouldn't have known if she hadn't mailed the letters."

From the book:

"If the bus driver hadn't had trouble backing out of the cul-de-sac... I never would have run into Josh." Ch. 20

→ three consecutive examples in one paragraph

"If Josh's car had started up... he wouldn't have been walking by my locker." Ch. 20

→ past condition → past result that didn't happen

"If Peter hadn't had to meet Ms. Wooten... he would not have been walking down the hallway." Ch. 20

→ chain of coincidences expressed in third conditional

SESSION 4: PRACTICE (see next page for answers)

Chapters 19–24 & The Law of Shortsightedness

Vocabulary

1. Fill in: Meeting him again in that café was pure _____. Neither of them had planned to be there.
2. Fill in: The project went _____ wrong. Now there is no easy solution.
3. Fill in: She had a _____ look on her face — stunned and unable to speak.
4. True or False: A momentous event is important and not quickly forgotten.
5. Fill in: My neighbor plays loud music every night at 3am. He is completely _____.

Recycled — Session 3

6. Fill in: The long-awaited announcement turned out to be deeply _____. Everyone expected more.

Grammar — Third Conditional

7. Complete: If she _____ (not mail) the letters, Peter never would have found out.
8. Rewrite using the third conditional: "She mailed the letters. Everything went wrong."
9. Choose: "If Josh's car had started, he _____ (will not walk / would not have walked) past her locker."
10. Correct using third conditional: "If I studied harder, I would passed the exam."

Recycled — Adjectives vs. Adverbs

11. Choose: "She answered his question very (confident / confidently)."

SESSION 4: PRACTICE ANSWERS

Chapters 19–24 & The Law of Shortsightedness

Vocabulary

1. Fill in: Meeting him again in that café was pure serendipity. Neither of them had planned to be there.
2. Fill in: The project went colossally wrong. Now there is no easy solution.
3. Fill in: She had a shell-shocked look on her face — stunned and unable to speak.
4. True or False: A momentous event is important and not quickly forgotten.
5. Fill in: My neighbor plays loud music every night at 3am. He is completely insufferable.

Recycled — Session 3

6. Fill in: The long-awaited announcement turned out to be deeply anticlimactic. Everyone expected more.

Grammar — Third Conditional

7. Complete: If she had not mailed (not mail) the letters, Peter never would have found out.
8. Rewrite using the third conditional: "If she hadn't mailed the letters, nothing would have gone wrong."
9. Choose: "If Josh's car had started, he (will not walk / would not have walked) past her locker."
10. Correct using third conditional: "If I had studied harder, I would have passed the exam."

Recycled — Adjectives vs. Adverbs

11. Choose: "She answered his question very (confident / confidently)."