

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

SESSION #2 (CH. 7-12)—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 2: CHAPTERS 7-12 & THE LAW OF IRRATIONALITY

Irrationality is the quality of thinking or acting in an unreasonable or emotional way instead of using calm logic. People often believe they are being logical, but their emotions secretly influence their decisions.

FROM THE NOVEL

"Mentally, I ran through the list of girls it could be. It was a short list... I was about to ask him who when the librarian came over to shush us, and then we went back to doing work and Josh didn't bring it up again and I didn't ask. Honestly, I didn't want to know. It wasn't me, and that was all I cared about. I didn't think for one second that the girl he liked was Margot." (Ch. 12)

GREENE'S LAW

Robert Greene writes that most of us believe we make decisions with our minds. We like to think we are careful and rational, but in reality, our emotions are usually in control, and we do not even notice. When something important happens, our feelings react first, and then our mind creates a reason for what our feelings already decided. We look for information that supports what we already want to believe. We avoid facts that make us uncomfortable. This is not a character flaw. It is simply how human beings work. The goal is not to stop having emotions. The goal is to notice when emotions are driving our behavior, especially when we are under stress, afraid of change, or about to lose something we love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Lara Jean runs through an entire mental list of girls Josh might like and never once puts Margot on it. She even admits: "Honestly, I didn't want to know." Greene says we look for information that supports what we already want to believe and avoid facts that make us uncomfortable. What did Lara Jean already want to believe, and what was her mind quietly protecting her from seeing?
2. In Chapter 9, Lara Jean hides the car accident from Margot when she calls. She tells herself she is protecting her sister. Greene says our mind creates a reason for what our feelings already decided. What feeling is actually making this decision, and what is the rational-sounding explanation covering it up?
3. In Chapter 12, when Lara Jean finally learns it is Margot that Josh likes, she says: "In retrospect, it wasn't so surprising." She could see it clearly, after the emotional stakes were gone. Greene says our emotions distort what we are able to see in the moment. What does it mean that the truth was obvious in hindsight but invisible when it mattered?
4. In Chapter 11, when Margot's name comes up over Sunday dinner, Josh gets stiff. Nobody says anything. The conversation moves on. Greene says we avoid facts that make us uncomfortable. What uncomfortable fact is everyone at that table avoiding — and why does it feel easier not to say it? Greene says this is simply how human beings work — we all do this. Can you think of a small, everyday example where you noticed yourself steering away from a thought or a fact you were not quite ready to face?

SESSION 2: VOCABULARY

Chapters 7–12 & The Law of Irrationality



reluctantly adv. /rɪˈlʌk.tənt.li/ ri-LUK-tunt-lee

Definition: If someone does something reluctantly, they do it unwillingly or without enthusiasm because they would prefer not to do it.

From the book: “Well, my car looks fine,” he says reluctantly. (Ch. 8)



skittish adj. /ˈskɪt.ɪʃ/ SKIT-ish

Definition: If a person or animal is skittish, they are easily frightened or nervous and tend to react in sudden or unpredictable ways.

From the book: “I (or anyone, really) would consider myself a skittish driver.” (Ch. 8)



tantalizingly adv. /ˈtæn.tə.laɪ.zɪŋ.li/ TAN-tuh-ly-zing-lee

Definition: If something is done tantalizingly, it is done in a way that attracts or tempts you but deliberately delays giving you what you want.

From the book: “Lara Jean got into...” Kitty pauses tantalizingly. (Ch. 9)



hinge on phrasal v. /ˈhɪndʒ ɒn/ HINJ on

Definition: If one thing hinges on another, it depends entirely on that other thing.

From the book: “Junior year is the most important year, a year so crucial that everything else in life hinges upon it.” (Ch. 10)



trifle with phrase /ˈtraɪ.fəl wɪð/ TRY-ful with

Definition: If you say that someone is not to be trifled with, you mean they must be treated with caution and respect because they are powerful or capable of causing harm.

From the book: “Kitty might be the baby of the family, but she is not someone to trifle with.” (Ch. 11)

SESSION 2: GRAMMAR

Chapters 7–12 & The Law of Irrationality

Past Perfect

We use the past perfect (had + past participle) to show that one action happened before another point or action in the past. It helps make the order of past events clear.

Timeline: [← past perfect ←] then [← simple past ←] now

Example:

"We'd hoped for girls, but then we saw the movers unload a boy bike."

(hoping happened first; seeing happened later)

Form

(+) Subject + had ('d) + past participle

(-) Subject + hadn't + past participle

(?) Had + subject + past participle?

Note

The contraction 'd can mean had or would. *Example: I'd, you'd, they'd.* Context tells you the meaning:

"She'd arrived before us."

(= had arrived — past perfect)

"She'd love to come."

(= would love — conditional)

From the book

"Mommy had died the year before and ever since, Margot rarely said no to anything if it was for Kitty."

Ch. 12

→ the death happened earlier

"We'd hoped for girls, but then we saw the movers unload a boy bike." Ch. 12

→ hoping came first

"The month before, from the upstairs playroom, we'd watched Josh's family move in." Ch. 12

→ watching happened earlier in the story

SESSION 2: PRACTICE

Chapters 7–12 & The Law of Irrationality

Vocabulary

1. Fill in: The child _____ ate his vegetables because he was not allowed to leave the table until he finished them.
2. True or False: A skittish driver is confident and relaxed behind the wheel
3. Fill in: She paused ____ before telling us the answer, enjoying our suspense
4. Complete: The success of the whole plan ____ whether she agrees to help
5. True or False: Someone who is not to be trifled with is weak and easy to dismiss.

Recycled Vocabulary— Session

6. Fill in: _____, I realize I should have applied for that job when I had the chance.

Grammar — Past Perfect

7. Choose: When I called her, she (already left / had already left)
 8. Correct: "When Margot left for Scotland, Lara Jean never traveled outside the country.
 9. Complete: By the time the letter arrived, Lara Jean ____ (not / realize) it had been sent
 10. Write one sentence using the past perfect to describe something that had already happened when you arrived somewhere.
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Recycled Grammar — Present Perfect

11. Write one present perfect sentence about an experience you have had.
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