

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

SESSION #3 (CH. 13-18)—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 3: CHAPTERS 13–18 & THE LAW OF DEATH DENIAL

Death denial is the habit of avoiding thoughts about death, endings, and loss. A person in denial about death (or endings or loss) stays busy, makes plans, and fills their days, partly to avoid thinking about the fact that time is limited and that the people they love will not always be here.

FROM THE NOVEL

"First-day-of-school breakfast was always a big thing with my mom, and then Margot took over, and now I guess it's my turn. The pancakes are a little dense, not quite as light and fluffy as Margot's. And the coffee... well, is coffee supposed to be light brown like cocoa?" (Ch. 15)

GREENE'S LAW

Robert Greene writes that most people spend their lives avoiding one simple truth: our time is limited, and the people we love will not always be here. We stay busy, make plans, and fill our days. Part of the reason we do this is to avoid thinking about loss and endings. But Greene argues that this avoidance actually makes us less alive. When we allow ourselves to think honestly about the people we have lost, we often discover something surprising: they continue to shape us. Everything about how a person lived, what they cared about, and what they left behind stays with us. It becomes part of who we are. Grief, Greene suggests, is not only about loss. It is also about learning how to carry someone forward.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Chapter 15, Lara Jean makes the first-day-of-school breakfast alone for the first time, a tradition that began with her mother and passed to Margot before reaching her. The pancakes come out a little dense. Greene says the people we lose become part of who we are through what they leave behind. Is there a tradition, habit, or small ritual in your own life that connects you to someone from your past—something you do now because someone else did it first?
2. The hatbox was a gift from Lara Jean's mother. It holds five letters to five boys. When Lara Jean discovers it might be gone, she sinks to the floor. What does the hatbox represent beyond the letters inside it, and why does the thought of losing it feel so much bigger than losing some paper?

SESSION 3: VOCABULARY

Chapters 13–18 & The Law of Death Denial



covet v. /ˈkʌv.ɪt/ KUV-it

If you covet something, you strongly want to have it for yourself, especially something that belongs to someone else.

"Margot's been gone less than a week and look at me, how fast I cave. How fast I covet." Ch. 13



traitorous adj. /ˈtreɪ.tər.əs/ TRAY-ter-us

If you describe feelings or actions as traitorous, you mean they represent a serious betrayal of someone who trusted you.

"Thinking these kinds of thoughts, feeling these kinds of feelings — it's more than disloyal. It's downright traitorous." Ch. 13



impromptu adj. /ɪmˈprɑːmp.tuː/ im-PROMP-too

An impromptu action or event is one that happens without any planning or preparation.

"Not that anything exciting happened, for instance an impromptu game of spin the bottle or seven minutes in heaven." Ch. 17



anticlimactic adj. /ˌæn.tɪ.klaɪˈmæ.k.tɪk/ an-tee-kly-MAK-tik

If you describe an event as anticlimactic, you mean it was disappointing because it was much less exciting or dramatic than you had expected.

"It was so anticlimactic after all that planning and anticipation." Ch. 17



frenzied adj. /ˈfrɛn.zɪd/ FREN-zeed

Frenzied activities or situations are wild, uncontrolled, and driven by very strong feelings of excitement or panic.

"His face is hazy and I can tell he is still with Audubon's birds and not at all focused on my frenzied state." Ch. 18

SESSION 3: GRAMMAR

Chapters 13–18 & The Law of Death Denial

Adjectives vs. Adverbs

Adjectives describe NOUNS. They answer: What kind? Which one?

"She is a wistful girl." / "He had a frenzied look on his face."

Adverbs describe VERBS, ADJECTIVES, or other ADVERBS. They answer: How?

"She spoke wistfully." / "He looked absolutely terrified."

Common error — noun instead of adjective after a linking verb (be, feel, look, seem, sound):

X "I am anxiety." ✓ "I am anxious."

X "She is stress." ✓ "She is stressed."

X "I am exciting." ✓ "I am excited."

Common error — adjective instead of adverb to describe an action:

X "She spoke quiet." ✓ "She spoke quietly."

X "He ran quick." ✓ "He ran quickly."

Common error — adverb instead of adjective to describe a noun:

X "She is quietly." ✓ "She is quiet."

X "He is enthusiastically." ✓ "He is enthusiastic."

Forming adverbs: most adjectives + -ly

wistful → wistfully / frenzied → frenziedly

Irregular: good → well / fast → fast / hard → hard

From the book:

"Wistfully, she says, 'I wish I'd been in love more than once.'" Ch. 5

→ adverb modifying how she speaks

"It was so anticlimactic after all that planning and anticipation." Ch. 17

→ adjective after linking verb **was**

"Kitty nods begrudgingly." Ch. 3

→ adverb modifying the verb **nods**

SESSION 3: PRACTICE (see next for answers)

Chapters 13–18 & The Law of Death Denial

Vocabulary

1. Fill in: She ___ her sister's beautiful apartment every time she visited.
2. True or False: An impromptu dinner party is one that has been carefully planned for weeks.
3. Fill in: The long-awaited film turned out to be deeply ___. Nothing exciting happened at all.
4. Fill in: She rushed into the room in a ___ panic, certain she had missed her flight.
5. Fill in: Stealing from your closest friend is ___.

Recycled Vocabulary— Session 1

6. True or False: If a wound festers, it heals cleanly and quickly.

Grammar — Adjectives vs. Adverbs

7. Choose: "She looked at him (wistful / wistfully) as he walked away."
8. Correct: "I am nervousness about the exam."
9. Choose: "She speaks English very (good / well)."
10. Correct: "He ran quick down the hallway."

Recycled Grammar — Past Perfect

11. Complete: By the time she wrote the letter, she ___ (already / decide) to let him go.

SESSION 3: PRACTICE ANSWERS

Chapters 13–18 & The Law of Death Denial

Vocabulary

1. Fill in: She coveted her sister's beautiful apartment every time she visited.
2. True or **False**: An impromptu dinner party is one that has been carefully planned for weeks.
3. Fill in: The long-awaited film turned out to be deeply anticlimactic. Nothing exciting happened at all.
4. Fill in: She rushed into the room in a frenzied panic, certain she had missed her flight.
5. Fill in: Stealing from your closest friend is traitorous.

Recycled Vocabulary— Session 1

6. True or False: If a wound festers, it does not heal cleanly and quickly.

Grammar — Adjectives vs. Adverbs

7. Choose: "She looked at him (~~wistful~~ / wistfully) as he walked away."
8. Correct: "I am nervousness about the exam."
9. Choose: "She speaks English very (~~good~~ / well)."
10. Correct: "He ran quickly down the hallway."

Recycled Grammar — Past Perfect

11. Complete: By the time she wrote the letter, she had already (already / decide) to let him go.