

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

SESSION #6 (CH. 33-40)—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. 25–32	<i>The Law of Covetousness</i>
6	July 8, 2026	Ch. 33–40	<i>The Law of Role-Playing</i>
7	July 15, 2026	Ch. 41–48	<i>The Law of Envy</i>
8	July 22, 2026	Ch. 49–56	<i>The Law of Compulsive Behavior</i>
9	July 29, 2026	Ch. 57–64	<i>The Law of Conformity</i>
10	August 5, 2026	Ch. 65–72	<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 6: CHAPTERS 33-40 & THE LAW OF ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing is when you act out a particular version of yourself for the people around you, presenting qualities or feelings that fit the situation rather than what you actually feel. Greene uses the term not to describe pretending to be someone else entirely, but to describe the everyday performance all people put on in social life.

FROM THE NOVEL

"Ready?" Peter asks me... "Then let's talk strategy for a second. All you have to do is act like you're in love with me. That shouldn't be too hard." (Ch. 38)

GREENE'S LAW

Robert Greene writes that all of us wear a social mask. We present the version of ourselves we want others to see. We pretend to be confident when we feel uncertain, relaxed when we are anxious, indifferent when we care deeply. Greene calls this **role-playing**: the performance we put on for the world, and sometimes for ourselves. This is not dishonesty. It is simply how people behave in social life. But Greene argues that the mask always has cracks. No matter how carefully we manage our image, our real feelings find small ways out, whether it be in a moment of nervous laughter, a word we did not mean to say, or a look that crosses our face before we can control it. These cracks, Greene says, reveal more about a person than anything they consciously choose to show. The important question is not whether someone is wearing a mask—everyone is. The question is what the mask is hiding, and whether the person underneath has the character to match the image they are projecting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Chapter 38, Peter coaches Lara Jean before they walk into the party: "All you have to do is act like you're in love with me." He treats love as something you can perform on command. Greene says role-playing is the performance we put on for others and sometimes for ourselves. Looking at how carefully Peter manages this scene, what does his need to control every detail of the performance suggest about what he's protecting?
2. In Chapter 34, Peter and Lara Jean sit on the library floor—"the section nobody ever goes to"—and have an honest, unscripted conversation. He admits he doesn't flirt with her, unlike with everyone else. Greene says the mask always has cracks where real feeling leaks through. What is different about Peter in this scene compared to the version of him performing at the party?
3. At Steve Bledell's party, Lara Jean says crossing the room toward Genevieve's friends "feels like crossing a continent." She is acting a part she has never played before. Greene says everyone wears a social mask in some part of their life. Is there a role you've had to play at some point—at work, in a new group, in an unfamiliar situation—where you had to act more confident than you actually felt? What was that like?

SESSION 6: VOCABULARY

Chapters 33–40 & The Law of Role-Playing



eerily adv. /ˈɪər.i.li/ eer-uh-lee

If something happens eerily, it happens in a way that feels strange and slightly unsettling—wrong in a way you cannot quite explain.

"She's been eerily, disturbingly quiet." (Ch. 36)



flustered adj. /ˈflʌs.təd/ FLUS-terd

If you are flustered, you feel confused, nervous, or rushed, usually because you are in an awkward situation or have too many things to deal with at the same time.

"I'm still so flustered from Peter's sudden appearance that I can't think." (Ch. 37)



interrogate v. /ɪnˈter.ə.ɡeɪt/ in-TAIR-uh-gayt

If you interrogate someone, you ask them a lot of questions in a demanding or aggressive way, often because you want information they may not want to give.

"Quit interrogating me, Peter." (Ch. 37)



mesmerized adj. /ˈmez.mə.raɪzd/ MEZ-muh-ryzd

If you are mesmerized by something, you are so fascinated or attracted by it that you cannot stop watching or paying attention to it.

"I'm so mesmerized I don't even notice when Lucas Krapf comes up to me." (Ch. 38)



dismissive adj. /dɪˈsmɪs.ɪv/ dih-SMIS-iv

If you are dismissive of someone or something, your behavior or words show that you do not think they are worth taking seriously.

"Peter makes a dismissive sound. 'You're too dreamy-eyed.'" (Ch. 38)

SESSION 6: GRAMMAR

Chapters 33–40 & The Law of Role-Playing

Question Formation — “BE” as auxiliary VERB and as MAIN VERB

- Last week we learned that some auxiliary verbs are followed by the **base form** of the main verb.
 - These include **do / don’t / does / doesn’t / did / didn’t / can / can’t / could / couldn’t / will / won’t / would / wouldn’t / should / shouldn’t / must / mustn’t / shall / shall not / may / may not / might / might not**.
 - If an auxiliary verb from the list above is in a question, it follows this grammar recipe:
 - > **AUX verb + subject + BASE FORM of the main verb + ?**
- Other auxiliary verbs—such as the verb “to be”—follow a different pattern.
 - These include **am / am not / is / isn’t / are / aren’t / was / wasn’t / were / weren’t**
 - If the verb “to be” functions as an **AUXILIARY VERB**, it follows this grammar recipe:
 - > **AUX verb + subject + PRESENT PARTICIPLE (-ING) + ?**
 - If the verb “to be” functions as the **MAIN VERB**, it follows this grammar recipe:
 - > **BE + subject + ?**

“BE” VERB	“BE” as AUXILIARY VERB Aux + subject + PRESENT PARTICIPLE (-ING)	“BE” as MAIN VERB BE + subject + ?
is / isn’t	<i>What is she thinking?</i> <i>Is he still looking at us?</i> <i>Why is he yelling at her?</i> <i>Isn't he still dating Genevieve?</i> <i>Isn't Peter trying to make Gen jealous?</i>	<i>Is this for the PTA bake sale?</i> <i>How much is this globe?</i> <i>What kind of person is she?</i> <i>Isn't she your sister?</i> <i>Isn't that Josh's house?</i>
are / aren’t	<i>What are you doing here?</i> <i>Who are we talking about here?</i> <i>Are you coming or what?</i> <i>Aren't you going to say anything?</i> <i>Why aren't you sitting with Peter?</i>	<i>Are you serious?</i> <i>What are your plans?</i> <i>Where are my keys?</i> <i>Aren't you tired?</i> <i>Aren't we done yet?</i>
was / wasn’t	<i>What was she doing there?</i> <i>Why was he acting like that?</i> <i>What was I thinking?</i> <i>Wasn't he sitting right next to her?</i> <i>Wasn't Josh helping them with the tree?</i>	<i>Was it a mistake?</i> <i>How long was she gone?</i> <i>Wasn't that your idea?</i> <i>Wasn't she supposed to call?</i> <i>Was she really that upset?</i>
were / weren’t	<i>What were you two talking about?</i> <i>Why were you avoiding me?</i> <i>Where were you last night?</i> <i>Weren't you just leaving?</i> <i>Why weren't you paying attention?</i>	<i>Were you there?</i> <i>Where were you?</i> <i>Were they really just friends?</i> <i>Weren't you scared?</i> <i>Weren't they already broken up?</i>
am / *am not	<i>Why am I even doing this?</i> <i>What am I supposed to say?</i> <i>Am I making the right choice?</i> <i>*Am I not making myself clear?</i> <i>*Aren't I being ridiculous?</i>	<i>What kind of mood am I in?</i> <i>Am I being naive?</i> <i>Am I bothering you?</i> <i>Am I not your sister?</i> <i>Aren't I good enough?</i>
*Note: “am not” has no standard contraction in questions. “Aren't I?” is used informally.		

Question Formation — Reference Table

Question Type	Negative Contraction	Recipe	Example
do / does / did	don't / doesn't / didn't	Aux + subject + BASE FORM + ?	"What do you talk about?"
can, could, will, would, should, must	can't, couldn't, won't, wouldn't, shouldn't, mustn't	Aux (modal) + subject + BASE FORM + ?	"Why can't we just go?"
shall, may, might	shan't (rare), may not, might not	Aux (modal) + subject + BASE FORM + ?	"May I use your bathroom?"
am / is / are / was / were as AUXILIARY	—, isn't, aren't, wasn't, weren't	Aux + subject + PRESENT PARTICIPLE (-ing) + ?	"What are you doing here?"
am / is / are / was / were as MAIN VERB	—, isn't, aren't, wasn't, weren't	BE + subject + ?	"Is this for the bake sale?"
have / has / had	haven't / hasn't / hadn't	Aux + subject + PAST PARTICIPLE + ?	"How long have they been dating?"
who / what / which as SUBJECT	depends on verb	Question word + verb (agrees with subject) + ?	"Who knows about the letters?"
who / what / which as OBJECT	any appropriate contraction	Aux + subject + appropriate verb form + ?	"Who did Peter tell the secret to?"
where / when / why / how	any appropriate contraction	Aux + subject + appropriate verb form + ?	"Why won't you answer?"

Notes

- *May* and *might* have no standard negative contractions. 'May not' and 'might not' are always written in full.
- *Shall* and its negative, *shan't*, are rarely used in everyday American English.
- *Mustn't* is uncommon in American English. 'Don't have to' or 'can't' express the same idea.
- *Won't* is irregular because it does not follow the pattern of *will* + *n't*.
- *Am not* has no standard contraction in statements. In questions, 'aren't I?' is the accepted informal form. 'Am I not?' is formal.

Common Errors

- ✗ What are you do here? → ✓ What are you doing here?
Remember: *is/are/was/were* + PRESENT PARTICIPLE (-ing), **not** the base form
- ✗ What does she doing? → ✓ What does she do?
Remember: *does* + BASE FORM, not present participle
- ✗ Where you are going? → ✓ Where are you going?
Remember: when forming questions, the auxiliary comes before the subject

SESSION 6: PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Chapters 33–40 & The Law of Role-Playing

Vocabulary

1. Fill in the blank: After the argument, the house became ____ quiet.
2. True or False: A dismissive response shows that you take someone's idea very seriously.
3. Which of the following best describes someone who is mesmerized?
 - a. They are bored and keep checking their phone.
 - b. They are completely absorbed and cannot stop watching.
 - c. They are confused and do not understand what they are seeing.
4. Fill in the blank: Peter rolled his eyes and said, "Stop ____ me! I already told you everything I know."
5. True or False: If you are flustered, you feel calm, organized, and completely in control.
6. Choose the correct sentence:
 - a. She smiled eerily, as if she knew something nobody else did.
 - b. She smiled eerily because she was so happy to see her friend.
7. Fill in the blank: Lara Jean was so ____ watching Genevieve and Peter argue in the kitchen that she didn't notice Lucas standing next to her.
8. True or False: If you interrogate someone, you ask them one polite question and wait patiently for the answer.
9. Fill in the blank: Peter made a ____ sound and said, "You're too dreamy-eyed," as if her opinion wasn't worth taking seriously.
10. True or False: If you are mesmerized by something, you find it so fascinating that you can't look away.

Recycled Vocabulary— Session 5

11. Fill in the blank: She did a ____ when she saw Peter walk in wearing an apron — she had to look twice to be sure.
12. True or False: If you take the initiative, you wait for someone else to decide what to do first.
13. Choose the word that best completes the sentence: "She refused to ____ her contribution to the project with a number — it was simply too complex to reduce to a single figure."
 - a. interrogate
 - b. quantify
 - c. mesmerize
14. Fill in the blank: Kitty and Lara Jean looked at each other ____, barely able to contain their excitement.
15. True or False: A smirk is a warm, open smile that shows genuine friendliness.

Grammar

Section 1: BE as Auxiliary Verb (am / is / are / was / were + present participle)

1. Choose the correct form: "What ___ you doing here?" (is / are / do)
2. Correct the error: "Why is he go to the party without telling anyone?"
3. Write a negative question using: he / be / paying attention
4. Choose the correct form: "Were they ___ about us?" (talk / talking / talked)
5. Correct the error: "Aren't you come with us?"

Section 2: BE as Main Verb

6. Is BE a main verb or auxiliary in this sentence? "Is she your sister?"
7. Write a question using: they / be / really just friends
8. Is BE a main verb or auxiliary? "Isn't he coming to the party?"
9. Write a negative question using: she / be / ready
10. What is the difference between these two questions? "Is she coming?" and "Is she serious?"

Section 3: Recycled — Auxiliary + BASE FORM (Session 5)

11. Correct the error: "Why she left without saying goodbye?"
12. Choose the correct form: "What did she ___ when she found out?" (say / saying / said)
13. Correct the error: "Could you helping me with this?"
14. Choose the correct form: "Why doesn't she ___ him the truth?" (tells / tell / telling)
15. Write a question using: she / ever / think / about going back
16. Choose the correct form: "Should she ___ him the truth?" (tells / tell / telling)

SESSION 6: PRACTICE QUESTION ANSWERS

Chapters 33–40 & The Law of Role-Playing

Vocabulary

1. Fill in the blank: After the argument, the house became eerily quiet — not a single sound from upstairs.
2. True or **False**: A dismissive response shows that you take someone's idea very seriously.
A dismissive response shows that you do not think something is worth serious attention.
3. Which of the following best describes someone who is mesmerized?
 - a. They are bored and keep checking their phone.
 - b. They are completely absorbed and cannot stop watching.**
 - c. They are confused and do not understand what they are seeing.
4. Fill in the blank: Peter rolled his eyes and said, "Stop interrogating me — I already told you everything I know."
5. True or **False**: If you are flustered, you feel calm, organized, and completely in control.
Flustered means confused, nervous, and rushed.
6. Choose the correct sentence:
 - a. She smiled eerily, as if she knew something nobody else did.**
 - b. She smiled eerily because she was so happy to see her friend.
7. Fill in the blank: Lara Jean was so mesmerized watching Genevieve and Peter argue in the kitchen that she didn't notice Lucas standing next to her.
8. True or **False**: If you interrogate someone, you ask them one polite question and wait patiently for the answer.
9. Fill in the blank: Peter made a dismissive sound and said, "You're too dreamy-eyed," as if her opinion wasn't worth taking seriously.
10. **True** or False: If you are mesmerized by something, you find it so fascinating that you cannot look away.

Recycled Vocabulary— Session 5

11. Fill in the blank: She did a double take when she saw Peter walk in wearing an apron — she had to look twice to be sure.
12. True or **False**: If you take the initiative, you wait for someone else to decide what to do first.
Taking the initiative means acting first without waiting for others.
13. Choose the word that best completes the sentence: "She refused to quantify her contribution to the project with a number — it was simply too complex to reduce to a single figure."
 - a. interrogate
 - b. quantify**
 - c. mesmerize
14. Fill in the blank: Kitty and Lara Jean looked at each other gleefully, barely able to contain their excitement.
15. True or **False**: A smirk is a warm, open smile that shows genuine friendliness.
A smirk shows self-satisfaction or pleasure at someone else's misfortune.

Grammar

Section 1: BE as Auxiliary Verb (am / is / are / was / were + present participle)

1. Choose the correct form: "What are you doing here?" (is / are / do)
are + present participle doing
2. Correct the error: "Why is he going to the party without telling anyone?"
is + present participle (not base form)
3. Write a negative question using: he / be / paying attention. Example: *Isn't he paying attention?*
4. Choose the correct form: "Were they talking about us?" (talk / talking / talked)
were + present participle
5. Correct the error: "Aren't you ~~come~~ coming with us?"
aren't + present participle, not base form

Section 2: BE as Main Verb

6. Is BE a main verb or auxiliary in this sentence? "Is she your sister?"
Answer: Main verb — no present participle follows; BE connects the subject to a noun
7. Write a question using: they / be / really just friends. Example: *Were they really just friends?*
8. Is BE a main verb or auxiliary? "Isn't he coming to the party?"
Answer: Auxiliary — isn't + present participle coming
9. Write a negative question using: she / be / ready. Example: *Isn't she ready?*
10. What is the difference between these two questions? "Is she coming?" and "Is she serious?"
Answer: In "Is she coming?", is is an **auxiliary** followed by the **present participle** coming. In "Is she serious?", is is the **main verb** followed by an adjective; **no other verb** is needed.

Section 3: Recycled — Auxiliary + BASE FORM (Session 5)

11. Correct the error: "Why ~~she left~~ did she leave without saying goodbye?"
the auxiliary "did" must come before the subject; did + base form
12. Choose the correct form: "What did she say when she found out?" (say / saying / said)
auxiliary verb "did" + base form
13. Correct the error: "Could you ~~helping~~ help me with this?"
auxiliary / modal verb "could" + base form
14. Choose the correct form: "Why doesn't she tell him the truth?" (tells / tell / telling)
Answer: auxiliary "doesn't" + base form "tell"
15. Write a question using: she / ever / think / about going back. Example: *Does she ever think about going back?*
16. Choose the correct form: "Should she tell him the truth?" (tells / tell / telling)
Answer: tell — modal verb + base form