

ISLE OF EVER EDUCATOR GUIDE



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Calonita is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* author of more than thirty books for teens and middle grade. Her books have sold more than a million copies and have been translated into fifteen languages. A graduate of Boston College, Jen began her career as an entertainment journalist at *Teen People* magazine, where she interviewed everyone from Dwayne Johnson to Reese Witherspoon. It was this job that inspired her first book, *Secrets of My Hollywood Life*, which was the winner of the Louisiana Young Readers Award. Jen went on to write six books in the bestselling series. She's also written several other series including the bestselling *Fairy Tale Reform School* and books in Disney's *New York Times* bestselling *A Twisted Tale* series. *A Twisted Tale's Mirror Mirror* was the winner of the 2020 Teen Choice Book Awards, the only national book awards program where winners are selected by children and teens. Her writing also has appeared in *Glamour*, *Marie Claire*, *Self*, *TV Guide*, and *Entertainment Weekly*. Jen can be found in New York with her husband, two boys and a feisty chihuahua named Ben Kenobi. When she isn't writing, she can be found traveling or dreaming about visiting Disney Parks.



ABOUT THE BOOK:

The first book in a brand new series featuring a girl who will inherit a mysterious fortune if she can break a centuries-old curse!

Days after her twelfth birthday, Everly "Benny" Benedict learns she's the heir to a fortune! But to collect the inheritance, she first has to play and win a game. Following clues that her ancestor left, Benny must locate a small island that vanished long ago, according to legend. She has only two weeks to play the game and find the island. If she's successful, she'll break a two-hundred-year-old curse. If she fails, the fortune will be forfeited. And if she's not careful, she'll cross paths with someone else who is after the island's secrets, and who will stop at nothing to get them. Because, as it turns out, there's far more than a fortune at stake.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: READING, WRITING, AND CONDUCTING RESEARCH



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VOCABULARY

The following list of vocabulary words can be found while reading *Isle of Ever*. Have students work together to define them using print or electronic dictionaries as they read. This could also be completed as a pre-reading activity. Have words and definitions displayed as a class list and add words to the list as needed.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ardor• disintegrate• imminent• maniacal• marauder | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• moored• permeating• pertussis• pompous• tomes |
|---|---|

PRE-READING ACTIVITY: ANTICIPATION GUIDE

As a pre-reading activity before starting *Isle of Ever*, guide readers through an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

Before Reading	After Reading	Statement
		Friendship is more important than money.
		Problems are best solved through teamwork
		People should be cautious about who they trust.
		Friendships can help you overcome challenges.
		True sacrifice involves giving up something valuable for the benefit of others.

Have readers complete the guide by marking each statement with a "+" for agreement or a "0" for disagreement. Challenge readers to commit to their beliefs as there are no conditional responses. Remind them that there are no correct or incorrect answers.



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ISLE OF EVER THROUGH WRITING AND RESEARCH

The following questions may be used throughout the study of *Isle of Ever* as reflective writing prompts or as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

1. In the prologue, when Evelyn meets Captain Jonas Kimble, she notices he keeps looking at his compass and asks if he needs directions to Greenport. He remarks, "Who says I'm using this compass to find a port? Let me tell you something, kid. Sometimes the journey is more important than the final destination." What does Captain Kimble's response about the compass reveal about his perspective on travel and exploration? What predictions can you make about his connection to Evelyn, and eventually, Benny?
2. Benny reveals parts of her family history, particularly her grandmother's and mother's experiences. What does Benny's statement, "We don't need anyone but each other," reveal about her relationship with her mother? How does her family history influence her character development?
3. At the beginning of *Isle of Ever*, Benny reveals that after Grams died, she and her mother moved around a lot, which has affected her ability to make friends. She states, "But when her mom lost her job in the next place, they moved again, and then again. Benny hated being the new girl at school all the time." What theme regarding family and resilience can be inferred from Benny and her mother's experiences? Discuss how their situation shapes their relationship.
4. When Benny accepts the challenge to play Evelyn's game for her inheritance, she questions her abilities and says, "Let the game begin, Benny thought, and her fingers began to tingle. What exactly was she getting herself into? A new house, she told herself again. A place with air-conditioning. Possibly a new car. She'd believe anything Evelyn wrote if it meant making these things happen." What emotions does Benny experience as she contemplates how her life might change if she wins the game? How would you feel if you were in Benny's situation?
5. As Wally gives Benny a tour of Summerville, he remarks " But I choose to believe in the original lady of this house. She was convinced the island existed. And sometimes, when you believe hard enough, it becomes your reality." Based on what you learn about Evelyn through her journal entries, what does this statement reveal about her character?



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6. Benny discovers a self-portrait of Evelyn in the library at Summerville and the author uses descriptive language to create a vivid image of Evelyn in the painting. What emotions are conveyed through the description of Evelyn's eyes, and how does this relate to Benny's perception of her?
7. The author states, "Benny felt something stir inside of her. She wasn't sure if it was the thrill of cracking the case, the game afoot, or this house. This place. Why did she feel like she belonged here? She tried to push the thought aside. Don't get attached she reminded herself." Discuss the emotions Benny experiences as she contemplates her feelings towards the house. How do these emotions reflect her character's internal conflict?
8. Based on what you learn through reading *Isle of Ever*, who is the character you most identify with, and for what reason?
9. As Benny gets used to her new surroundings she remarks "Mom had no more double shifts or dark shadows under her eyes. Instead, each morning she'd grab an umbrella and venture out into Greenport with Harris as her tour guide ('If you need me, I'll be back right away,' she'd say), and Benny would just let her go. She liked seeing her mom happy. Even if her own stress level was growing." What can be inferred about Benny's feelings regarding her mom's new routine? Do you think Benny should feel more stressed than her mom, considering the circumstances? Why or why not?
10. Sparrows are mentioned many times in *Isle of Ever*, from Evelyn's nickname to sparrows used to decorate Summerville, and the sparrows stamped on each of the pouches Benny finds. Discuss what sparrows symbolize and how Evelyn and Benny's characters relate to this symbolism.
11. Captain Jonas Kimble tells Evelyn, "It sounds fine at first. Never aging. But then you remember, you stay the same while others grow old. You're cursed to watch everyone around you die. To be helpless as the world passes you by." Do you think it would be a curse or a gift to live forever and never age? Why or why not?
12. The power of friendship is an ongoing theme in *Isle of Ever*. Compare and contrast Evelyn's friendships with Aggy, Thomas, and Laurel and Benny's friendships with Zara and Ryan. If you could only join one of these groups of friends, which group would you choose and why?



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13. When revealing to Zara and Ryan that she saw the island, Benny speculates why Evelyn did not tell where the island is located. Benny says, "I'm not sure. I get the impression she's worried someone will find the island before us. Her letters make me feel like she's afraid people might try to find the island for the wrong reasons." Do you agree with Benny's reasoning? Why or why not? If you were Evelyn, would you have done the same thing?

14. In her journal, Evelyn recalls the day she discovers Captain Kimble's unguarded treasure. She says, "How bad can living forever be? I have to save Aggy and my friends. I could feel the treasure calling to me as I neared the chest, the whispers growing louder and more urgent. Welcome, Evelyn Terry! Welcome home! The island knew I was here, and it wanted me to take its treasure. Who was I to deny the island this when I needed its help? I knelt beside the chest and placed my hand on the lid's latch." Knowing that taking the treasure is wrong, even though it could mean saving her friends, but without knowing the ultimate consequences, do you think Evelyn was making the right decision? Why or why not?

15. When Benny realizes Ryan has betrayed her, she thinks, "The first time she puts her faith in someone else, they double-cross her. How did she not see this coming? 'You tricked me,' she realized. Ryan's smile was eerie in the low light, the friendly smile she remembered nowhere in sight. 'Took you long enough to realize it.' Based on their friendship and teamwork in solving the clues, did you see Ryan's betrayal coming? Why or why not? Would you have been as understanding as Benny was of Ryan's motivation for finding the treasure? Why or why not?

16. The novel ends with the line, "'Everly Benedict,' Benny read. 'First let me say, I'm sorry I tricked you. The game is far from over. In fact, it's only just begun.'" Considering this, what do you predict will happen in the next installment of *Isle of Ever*?



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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Use the following research and activities inspired by *Isle of Ever* to extend the novel's instructional impact and learning for readers.

WRITE: Journal Entries

Throughout *Isle of Ever*, Evelyn writes a series of journal entries, not only to leave Benny clues, but to document her life as a young girl in Greenport. Have students create a series of journal entries from another character's point of view as they read the text. Have students follow the style of Evelyn's journals by giving each entry a title, date, and entry number.

Choose one character:

- Benny
- Zara
- Aggy
- Ryan
- Captain Kimble

Have students share their entries with peers and discuss why they chose that character's point of view.

RESEARCH: Blood Orange Moon

The mysterious Blood Orange Moon is mentioned throughout *Isle of Ever*. Have students use library and internet resources to learn more. Have students research:

- What is a blood moon?
- How often do they occur?
- When did the last blood orange moon occur?
- When will it occur again?
- What are other types of moons?
- What myths or beliefs are associated with blood moons?

After completing their research, have students share their knowledge with their peers. For an additional extension, have students create an infographic with their findings using a web-based program like Canva.com, Adobe Express, or Piktochart.com.



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RESEARCH: Whooping Cough

Whooping cough or “the Cough” was a source of panic for Evelyn and the citizens of Greenport in *Isle of Ever*. *The Greenport Herald* news reported: “Several businesses and the Greenport schoolhouse are closed indefinitely due to the outbreak of the Cough. Several families in Greenport have fallen ill in the last few days. Many more are believed to be in quarantine. A full account of the dead is not yet known, but it is believed that several have already died from illness. Greenport does not want to see a repeat of the Yellow Fever epidemic that plagued New York in the late 1700s and 1803, and felled thousands of people.” Infectious diseases were common during this time in history. Ask readers to begin research on infectious diseases during this period with this article:

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/common-diseases-18th-and-19th-century>

After discussing what was learned from the article, ask readers to use library and internet resources to learn more about two of the following:

- Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
- Yellow Fever
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Smallpox
- Diphtheria
- Cholera

Have students work in pairs or small groups to create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the symptoms of the two diseases, their transmission, their treatment, and their impact on society. Then, allow groups to present their findings.

RESEARCH: Pirates

The character of Captain Jonas Kimble was based on real-life pirate Captain William Kidd, a pirate who buried treasure on Gardiners Island off the eastern coast of Long Island, New York. Begin by reading about the inspiration for Captain Kimble here: <https://www.danspapers.com/2022/08/captain-kidd-gardiner-treasure-revealed> After reading, ask readers to summarize what they learned about the pirate and then focus their own research on exploring other pirates in history. Some famous pirates include:

- Blackbeard (Edward Teach)
- Bartholomew Roberts (“Black Bart”)
- Anne Bonny



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- Mary Read
- Calico Jack Rackham
- Sir Francis Drake
- William Kidd
- Henry Morgan
- Jean Lafitte

Other lists can also be found in these articles:

<https://www.thewayofthepirates.com/famous-pirates>

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/were-there-female-pirates>

Have students choose one famous pirate and have them use library and internet resources to research the life and times of the pirate. Have students create a digital timeline using a web-based tool like, Google Slides, Genially.com, Padlet, or Adobe Express. Have students include dates, pictures, maps, and any significant events of the pirate's life. Allow students to share what they discover and the legends behind these famous sea dwellers.

This guide was created by Melissa Silerio. Melissa is a school librarian and a former English teacher. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a minor in Middle School Education from The University of Texas at El Paso and a Master's Degree in Library Science from Sam Houston State University.