

2016 Carnegie Medal shortlist reading resources

Title: **Fire Colour One**
Author: **Jenny Valentine**
Publisher: HarperCollins



TALKING POINTS

What do you think about the scene described in the opening lines – a good way to draw you into the story?

Family

The focus of the book is a big reunion between Hannah, Iris and Ernest – do they all have the same motivations for wanting to get together?

“Family isn’t a word,” says Iris, quoting the movie *The Royal Tenenbaums*, “it’s a sentence.” Is that a fair description of how all the characters feel?

Ernest’s sister Margot has been dead for years – so how does she come to be such an important presence in Iris’s story?

Parents

Iris calls both her parents by their first names – why?

Hannah and Ernest couldn’t be more different as parents. What are their strengths as parents, and their weaknesses? (And what about Lowell?)

“You think you’re immune to money,” Hannah says to Iris. “You think you’re above all that, but you’re not.” How important is money, really, to the characters in the book?

When we hear about Hannah’s past, does that help to explain how she has become what she is today? Does it make her more sympathetic?

Has Ernest’s attitude to Iris and the world around him changed by the end of the book?

Thurston

Iris is drawn to Thurston because he’s so different from anyone she knows – what makes him special?

Do Thurston and Ernest have some things in common?

Why/How does Iris re-evaluate her relationship with Thurston over the course of the book?



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Faking it

All the characters spend some time pretending to be what they're not. Or do they?

"People believe what they see," Iris says. "And mostly they see whatever is put in front of them, if it's in their interests to believe." Do you think that's true?

So, that's quite a twist in the plot at the end. Did you see it coming? (Be honest.)

Does the book tell you something about the value of art, why we value what we do?

Fire

Why do you think Iris likes starting fires?

And why does she say the fire on the day of Ernest's funeral will be her last one?

What did the title, *Fire Colour One*, lead you to expect from the book?

Ending

Remember the "Prayers Answered" box Thurston made? Well, do the characters in this book get what they want at the end?

Or do they get what they deserve?

If you've read anything by Jenny Valentine before, can you see things the books have in common?

TALKING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights themes in this story

Access to leisure, play, culture and art; freedom of expression; full development of personality; protection and information; right to live with and be raised by your parents

Human rights questions

We have the right to be properly cared for, and parents should always consider what is best for children

What is Iris' experience of living with her mother?

Why does Hannah behave the way she does?



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We have right to create and enjoy art, and to develop our own personalities in an environment that respects us

Who inspires Iris to claim this right?

How does her personality change?

It says on the book cover, 'Love is the greatest work of art'. What does this mean?

- For a full version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights go to www.amnesty.org.uk/udhr

For more free teaching resources from Amnesty International go to www.amnesty.org.uk/education



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