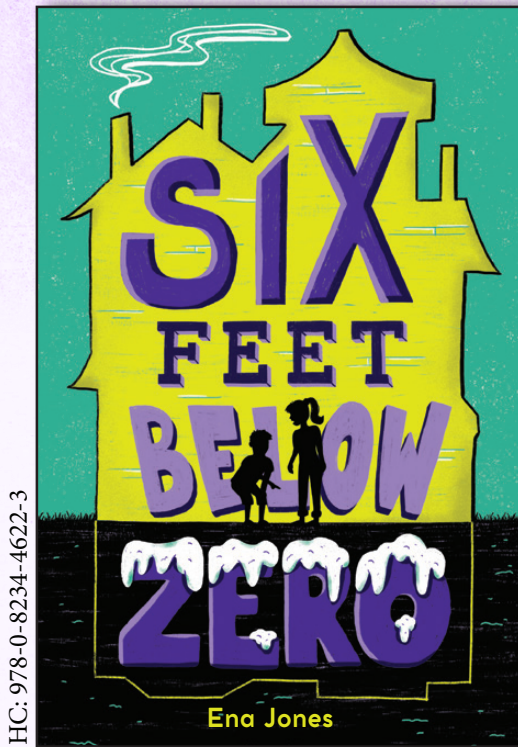


HOLIDAY HOUSE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Six Feet Below Zero by Ena Jones

ABOUT THE BOOK

A dead body. A missing will. An evil relative. The good news is, Great-Grammy has a plan. The bad news is, she's the dead body.

Rosie and Baker are hiding something. Something big. Before her death, their great-grandmother made them promise to pretend she's alive until they find her missing will and get it in the right hands. The will protects the family house from their grandmother, Grim Hesper, who would sell it and ship Rosie and Baker off to separate boarding schools. They've already lost their parents and Great-Grammy—they can't lose each other too.

The siblings kick it into high gear to locate the will, keep their neighbors from prying, and safeguard the house. Rosie has no time to cope with her grief as disasters pop up around every carefully planned corner. She can't even bring herself to read her last-ever letter from Great-Grammy. But the lies get bigger and bigger as Rosie and Baker try to convince everyone that their great grandmother is still around, and they'll need more than a six-month supply of frozen lasagna and mountains of toilet paper once their wicked grandmother shows up!

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

- Chapter "Zero" serves as an introduction or prologue to the story. How does it establish the conflict—the problem to be solved—in the novel? How does the basement play a pivotal role in the book? Explain why Rosie and Baker call the basement "Disaster Headquarters."
- Great-Grammy once told Rosie, "You and Baker are more alike than you think" (p. 13). How are the siblings alike? How are they different? Discuss how their character traits complement each other. Explain what Great-Grammy meant when she told them, "You two need each other" (p. 13). What is their first true act of teamwork? How do they need to act as a team to solve the mystery of the delinquent loan?



- Great-Grammy knew that she was dying. Discuss her elaborate plan to take care of Rosie and Baker. Explain why Great-Grammy told Baker, and not Rosie, the purpose of the new freezer. What is Rosie's reaction when Baker insists that they carry out Great-Grammy's wish to place her body in the freezer? YOU'VE GOT THIS, ROSIE is on a Post-it Note in Great-Grammy's handwriting. How does this give Rosie the courage to move forward with the plan? Explain why Great-Grammy knew that Rosie would need encouragement.
- Describe Grandmother Hesper. Why do the children call her "Grim Hesper"? The children live in fear of being placed in Grim Hesper's care. Discuss how their lives would change if that happened. Why is Hesper so eager to gain control of the children? Grim Hesper claims that Great-Grammy took out a loan against her property. At what point do the children suspect Grim Hesper is lying?
- Explain the following simile: "the kitchen phone was still flashing, like a lighthouse warning us away from a dangerous shoreline" (p. 72). Describe the "dangerous shoreline" the children encounter as the novel progresses. Discuss the various warning signs that threaten to throw them off course.
- Trust is a theme in the book. How does Great-Grammy trust Rosie and Baker to carry out her detailed plans. Great-Grammy knew that Hesper couldn't be trusted. What caused her to lose trust in her daughter? As Rosie and Baker set about living and surviving according to Great-Grammy's plan, they find themselves telling more and more lies. They are careful not to allow anyone in the house until the day Karleen invites herself. What is Karleen's reaction when she discovers they are in the house alone? At what point do they trust Karleen? Which other characters in the novel do the children learn to trust?
- Rosie says that Great-Grammy never forced them to get rid of their "memories" before they were ready. How does Grim Hesper have no regard for memories? Explain Baker's reaction when he discovers that Grim Hesper has put his trains up for auction. How does Rosie feel when she notices that Great-Grammy's yard art is missing? Explain how the missing "Home Sweet Home" yard art is a clue to the hiding place of Great-Grammy's final will.
- Grim Hesper threatens to take Great-Grammy to court and have her declared incompetent. At the end of the novel, the reader learns that Great-Grammy had always been deliberate and well-organized about her finances and property. How does this fact, and her elaborate plan to care for Rosie and Baker, reveal how competent she is? Explain how Great-Grammy would be proud of Rosie and Baker for carrying out her wishes and for solving the mysteries of the loan and the missing will.
- Discuss the humor in this mystery. Which character has the last laugh?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ena Jones, the author of *Six Feet Below Zero*, is also the author of the Clayton Stone series, about which *Kirkus Reviews* raved, "What really makes this take on the kid-turned-spy story special is that it has a heart." She grew up outside Washington, D.C., and now lives with her family in North Carolina, where she loves to cook a wide range of foods—including lasagna. Visit her online at enajones.com.

