

# TEACHER GUIDE

## PART 1 ~ CHAPTER 1

### New Year Birthday

#### Middle Grade – CH Discussion Questions and Light Lessons

The following questions can also be used as a PREVIEW to reading the chapter, giving the students a guide to look for certain information.

#### PART 1 Birthday Revelations

*“Look into the eyes of those who love life. There you will find the Light of the Universe.”*

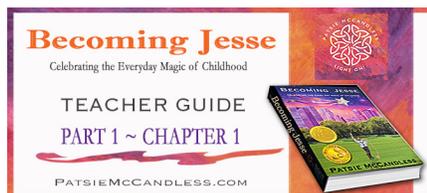
#### CH 1 – New Year Birthday - General Questions:

- What do you learn about Jesse and Billy's friendship?
- When the boys go to the rooftop, describe what is going on, and what they think is happening.

#### CH 1 – New Year Birthday – Detail Questions

1. What is the title of this chapter? (*New Year Birthday*)  
 Who are the two celebrating a birthday? (*Jesse and his cat, Gypsy*)  
 What does Billy Maguire say about them both? (*They are both orphans.*)  
 How does Gypsy cat greet the boys? (*Her trademark ‘wink’ – “the tip of her tail and her right ear crooked a salute.”*)
2. What does Jesse call his other grandmother? Why? (*Disappeared grandmother. She’s a mystery.*)
3. How does Dearie play-act with Jesse? (*‘puppet sock’ on her hand*)  
 When she asks him his birthdate, what is Jesse’s funny answer? (*New Year’s Eve - every year*)

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4. What does Billy Maguire call Jesse's mother, Jane? Why? (*"Angel Jane" – because her golden braid circle looked like a halo*)
5. What are two surprising things 4-year-old Billy said to Jane when he first met her? (*You have a baby inside you / I saw him! He waved to me!*)

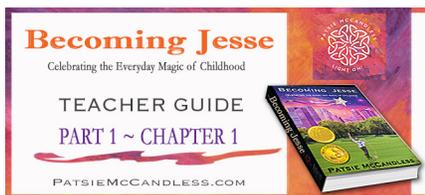
What else did he see 'inside' Jane? (*Lots of shiny lights. All sparkly.*)

6. Have you ever laughed like "the dish running away with the spoon"? Can you recite the nursery rhyme source? (*"Hey diddle diddle the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon. The little dog laughed to see such sport. And the dish ran away with the spoon."*)
7. Find some of made-up words and expressions from Dearie and Jesse. (*thrill-digging – quizzle – giggle-burst – giggle-snicksens – shiveral – Diggety-boo - gahslahzerous – Blue Ribbon, you - wispy slips*)

How do the sounds help you understand what they mean?

8. What is a Spoonerism? (*wordplay that switches the beginnings of two words*)  
Find a Spoonerism in this chapter. (*Hiss and Leer = Listen here*) Can you make up one of your own?
9. Who is the babysitter, Siobhan? (*Billy's older sister*)  
Her name is Gaelic. Can you find out how to pronounce her name? (*Sha-vawn*)
10. On this New Year's Eve, where is Conor going? (*to work as a waiter at the gahslahzerous Rainbow Room restaurant in Rockefeller Center*)  
Where is Dearie going? (*her Lady Bird Theater - next door - is hosting a celebration party*)
11. What is Conor's 'come-what-may lullaby' for Jesse? (*Silent Night*) What is unusual about this? (*He sang it the night Jesse was born... an orphan. Jesse wants it still, no matter the time of year. It puts Jesse right to sleep.*) [NOTE: this is important to remember in Chapter 26: Dear Life, when Jesse is in a dark place.]

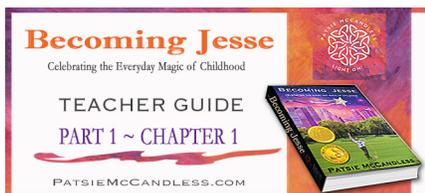
What is your favorite lullaby?



12. What did Billy slide under his pillow? (*Alarm clock*)  
 Why? (*He wakes Jesse before New Year's Eve midnight to sneak up to the roof for his Birthday fireworks.*)  
 Did you ever sneak something? How does it feel?
13. Jesse sometimes mixes up his words. On the way to the rooftop, what does he call their "expedition"? (*exhibition*)  
 Do you think Jesse is a feardy-cat? Would you be scared? Does this foreshadow what is ahead for the boys?
14. Name the famous locations in NYC that Billy points out from the roof top. (*Empire State Building, Chrysler building, Rockefeller Center, Times Square*)  
 Find pictures of them and locate them on a map.  
<https://duckduckgo.com/?q=Image%3A+map+of+Empire+State+Building%2C+Chrysler+building%2C+Rockefeller+Center%2C+Times+Square&t=h&iar=images&iax=images&ia=images>
15. What do you learn about Billy's daddy, Liam, and Jesse's daddy, James? (*They were best friends. Liam has a tugboat. James built the table they climb up on.*)
16. How does Billy think of Jesse (*Not best friends; more like a special little brother*)
17. When the boys hear the rumbles and see the far-off lights in the night sky, what do they think it is? (*Fireworks going off early in a far-off city – in New Jersey*)
18. How do the words let you know the severity of the storm? (*upside down – flashing clouds – shuddering blasts – gusts shrieked – thick lightning bolt – sizzling white – snapping in the black sky – ear-splitting thunder – howling wind – battering the rooftop*)
19. What is happening to Jesse and Billy in the wild wind? (*pushed them over like piffing little dust puffs – They helplessly goggled each other.*)  
 Can they hang on and get to safety with the wind pinning them down and the lightning flashing closer and closer?

### CH 1 – Old Barret Light Lessons:

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1. What did Old Barret gift to Dearie – ‘rivers and streams ago’ (a smooth white stone) What does she do with it? (touches the memories in it; feels its warmth; feels the flow of her Light energies)
2. What message does Old Barret give Dearie? (“When you live in the past, you are walking backward through life. So, you cannot go back. But you must choose to go forward.”)
3. Dearie uses an expression: “You are fine. So fine.” How do you think this makes them feel? (reassuring to the boys)

## **LIGHT LESSONS ~ PART 1 BIRTHDAY REVELATIONS (1 – 58)**

### **Phrases and Ideas to help find your Light – and keep it shining**

*“Look into the eyes of those you love. There you will find the Light of the Universe.”*

### **Chapter 1 NEW YEAR BIRTHDAY (3 – 12)**

**Ch 1/ 7** – “Jesse and Billy laughed like the dish running away with the spoon...”

**Ch 1/ 8** – “Now you boys are fine. So fine.”

**Ch 1/ 8** - “Gahslahzerous! It’s not a thing. It’s an attitude. A glamorous attitude.”

**Ch 1/ 8** – “...her beaming smile that always felt like a blessing.”

**Ch 1/ 9** – “It’s time you were fast asleep – in your deep wispy-slips.”