

*Stepping Stones* by Lucy Knisley

When Jen's mom and her mom's new boyfriend Walter decide to move from the big city to a quaint farm, she is understandably upset. Jen misses the city and her dad, and she's not used to having so many responsibilities. She's tasked with taking care of the farm's new chickens and helping out when they sell items at the local farmer's market. On top of all of that, Jen now has two stepsisters who stay with the family on the weekends. It's a lot of adjustment for a kid in a short amount of time. She just wants to find her place in this new blended family.

This graphic novel by Lucy Knisley is a fictionalized take of Knisley's own life as a kid. The art is lovely, the story is very realistic, and overall it's a wonderful read. You'll feel for her when she struggles with math while helping out at the market. You'll want to have a cozy hang out with the barn cats in the hayloft. You'll be just as frustrated at Walter as Jen is. Walter is the only real lowlight of this book. His behavior is honestly kind of uncalled for. This is the first book in the Peapod Farm series, so I hope that he becomes a better person over the course of the books. (Book #2, *Apple Crush* will likely be out in 2022.) And I have to say that life at Peapod Farm made me long for spring, and being able to plant my own garden!

GK