

STEPPING STONES

Written and Illustrated
by Lucy Knisley

Jen did not want to leave the city. She did not want to move to a farm with her mom and her mom's new boyfriend, Walter. She did not want to leave her friends and her dad. Most of all, Jen did not want to get new "sisters," Andy and Reese.

As if learning new chores wasn't hard enough, having to deal with perfect-at-everything Andy might be the last straw for Jen. Besides cleaning the chicken coop, trying to keep up with the customers at the local farmers' market, and missing her old life, Jen has to deal with her own insecurities about this new family . . . and where she fits in.



YouthREAD 2025

Grades 3-5
Book Selection

Join our CommunityREAD by reading and sharing this book, then enrich the experience with these questions and activities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Jen is dealing with the many big changes happening in her life. What are some of those big changes? What kind of big changes have happened in your life?
- Would you prefer to live in the city or on a farm? Why?
- Jen is a talented artist. How does she use her art talent? What is one thing you do well, and what do you do with your talent?
- What does Jen think of Andy at the beginning of the story? How do Jen's feelings about Andy change by the end of the story?
- Jen's mother's boyfriend, Walter, isn't always the nicest to her. In an interview, the author states, "I think it's important to show kids that adults aren't always the more mature ones in a situation; that they'll encounter adults in positions of authority who are not behaving at their best." Can you find an example of Walter's unkind behavior? How did it make Jen feel? What advice would you give Jen in this situation? What advice would you give Walter?

ACTIVITIES

- Jen loves to draw cats. Practice drawing your favorite animal or follow along with a cat drawing tutorial. You can use a drawing book or follow along with an online video. Scan the QR code for a playlist of cat drawing videos from *Art for Kids*.



- *Stepping Stones* is based on real events that happened to author, Lucy Knisley. Draw a short comic based on an experience from your own life. Need some blank comic templates? Check out this QR code for printable panels.



- Visit a local farmers' market when they open this spring. The Hancock County Farmers' Market runs from May-October, and it is held Thursdays from 4-6 PM at the Marathon Center for Performing Arts parking lot.

Share what you did with the library on Facebook (facebook.com/FHCPL) or Instagram (@FHCPL).



WHAT IS COMMUNITYREAD?

CommunityREAD is a month-long community event that encourages reading and discussion. Each year, a different CommunityREAD book is chosen, along with a selection of YouthREAD books that explore similar topics and themes for younger readers.

The 2025 CommunityREAD book is *Gaining Ground: A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, and Saving the Family Farm* by Forrest Pritchard. The author will speak at the Marathon Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, March 20 at 7:30 PM.

2025 YOUTHREAD TITLES

- Preschool: *Here Are the Seeds* by JaNay Brown-Wood
- Grades K-2: *Amara's Farm* by JaNay Brown-Wood
- Grades 3-5: *Stepping Stones* by Lucy Knisley
- Grades 6-8: *The Labors of Hercules Beal* by Gary D. Schmidt
- Grades 9-12: *Bend in the Road* by Sara Biren

