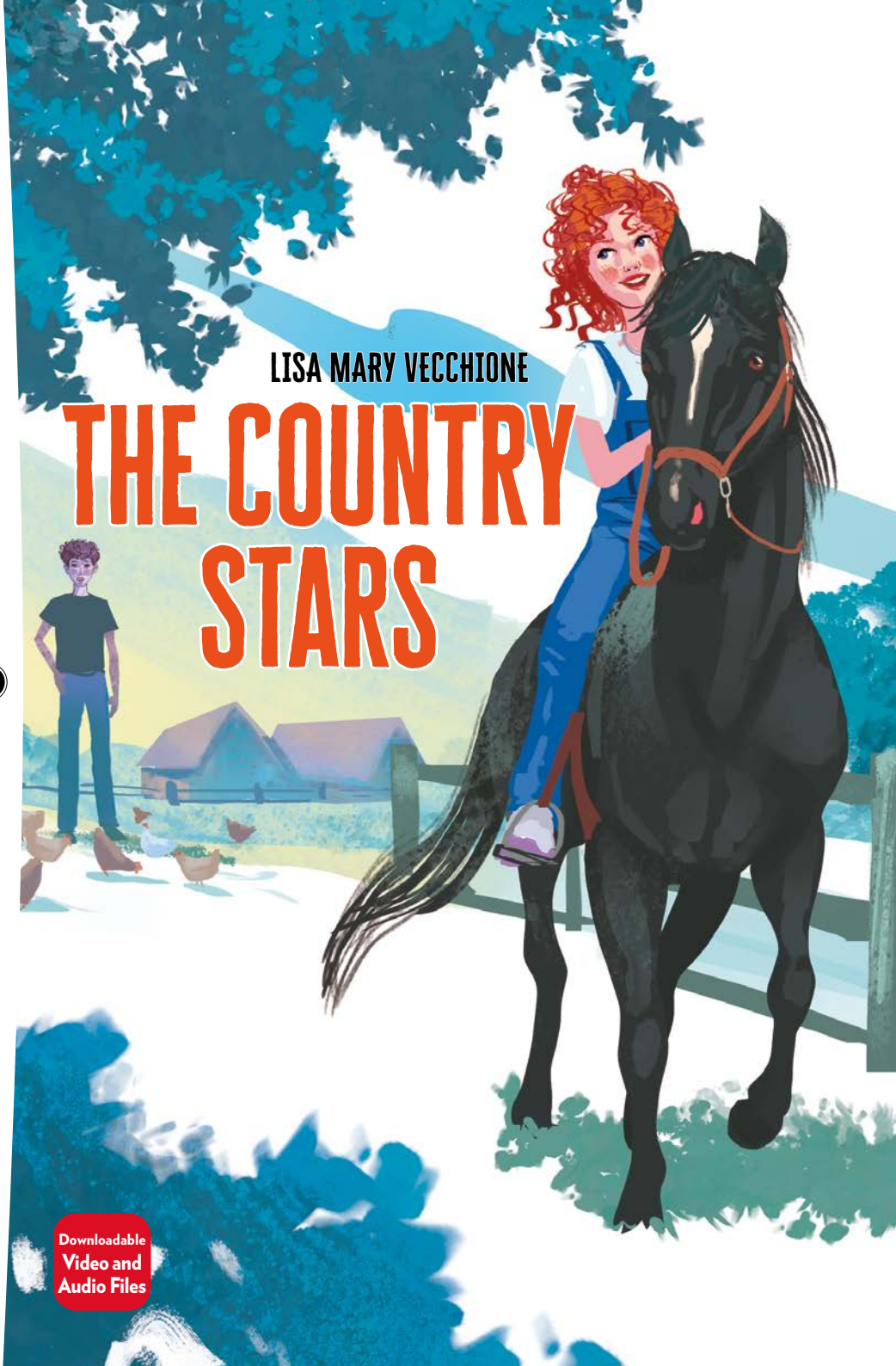
Stage 3 B1

Teen Readers

Original

LISA MARY VECCHIONE

THE COUNTRY STARS



Downloadable Video and Audio Files

Lisa Mary Vecchione

The Country Stars

For Review Only

Illustrated by
Marco Bregolato

Teen ELi Readers

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Main Characters



Jesse Walston

A 16-year-old country boy with big plans for the future.



Harper Anderson

A city girl who loves life in the countryside.



Oliver Grant

Jesse's loyal best friend who helps him in everything he does.



Uncle Roger

Jesse's uncle who lives and works in New York City.

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Mr. Walston

Jesse's father
is a hard-working farmer.



Mrs. Walston

Jesse's mother
who loves her family
and the farm.



Dr. Winthrop

The man from Cumberland's
Dairy Farm who enters
Buttercup the cow in the state
fair competition.



Suzy

Jesse's younger sister
who adores her big brother
and always wants
to be with him.

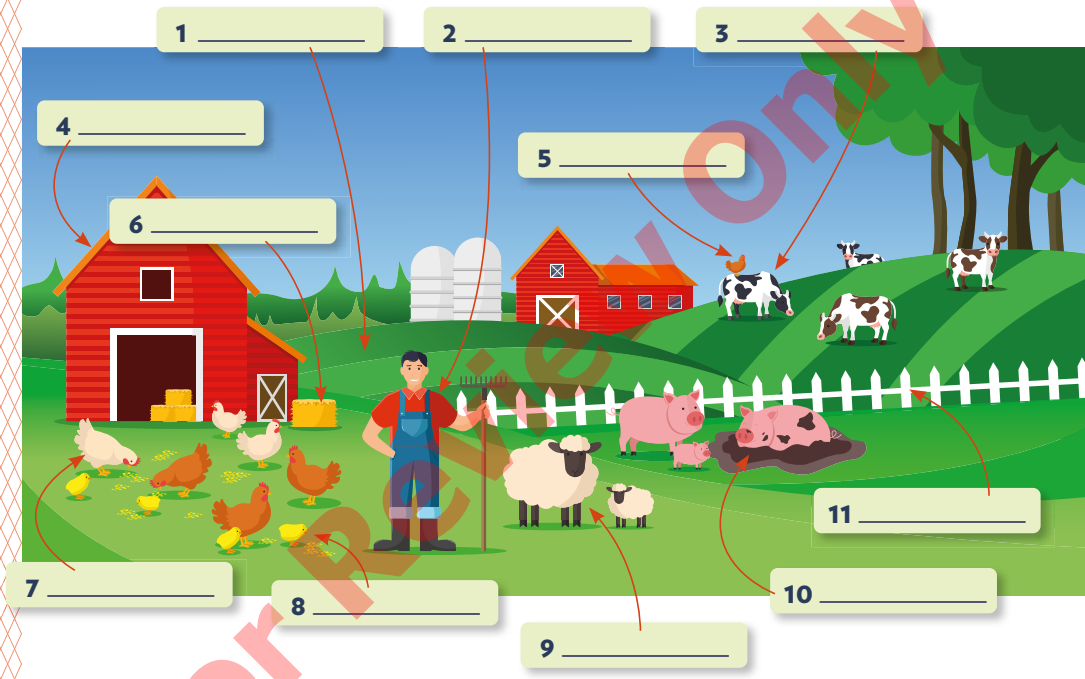
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Before you read

Vocabulary

1 **Label the picture with the correct words from the box.**

barn • field • chick • cow • hen • hay •
farmer • sheep • fence • pig • chicken



Writing B1 Preliminary

2 **You are planning to stay with a family in another town for a summer exchange program. Write an email to the family and:**

- tell them about yourself
- find out what outdoor activities there are to do
- ask what you should bring with you

Write about 100 words.

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Reading

B1 Preliminary

3 Complete the text with the correct words.

The Country Stars ___is___ about a boy named Jesse who (**1**) _____ on a farm. He (**2**) _____ living on the farm and (**3**) _____ to live in New York City when he is older. One day, he (**4**) _____ a girl named Harper, (**5**) _____ loves staying on her grandmother's farm. Will she make Jesse realize how lucky he is to live in nature?

	A	B	C	D
	A was	B does	C has	D is
1	A live	B leaves	C lives	D is living
2	A don't like	B doesn't like	C isn't liking	D liked
3	A hopes	B dream	C thinks	D desired
4	A does meet	B meets	C knows	D see
5	A who	B which	C that	D where

Speaking in Pairs

21st-century Skills

4 Jesse lives on his family farm. He helps his family but dreams of living in a big city. Discuss the following questions with your partner.

1. Do you think living in the countryside is healthier than living in the city?
2. Do you like animals? If so, what is your favorite animal?
3. Do you have any pets? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having pets?
4. Do you prefer doing indoor activities, like playing video games, or outdoor activities, like walking in the park?
5. What is your favorite season of the year? Why?

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Chapter 1

Good Morning

2 BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! Jesse couldn't believe it. Morning already? It seemed like he had just fallen asleep. He reached for his cell phone on the table near his bed to turn the noise off, and saw it was already 6:01 in the morning. The horrible BEEP! stopped and he told himself: *Time to get up. Time to do my chores*[1].

Jesse slowly gets out of bed to begin his morning chores. He gets up every morning at 6 o'clock to help his parents on the farm. His mother is making breakfast in the kitchen.

Jesse lived on his family's big farm with his parents and his little sister, Suzy. Every morning at 6 o'clock—rain or shine[2]—he got up to take care of the animals. It was tiring and difficult at times, but his parents needed his help.

Outside his window he could hear the hens clucking[3] and knew they must be hungry. He slowly got out of bed and put his shoes on. As he was walking towards the door, his mom called from the kitchen, "Good morning, honey! Breakfast will be ready soon." Jesse just waved his hand. His eyes were half open.

1 **chores** jobs
2 **rain or shine** in any weather
3 **cluck** the sound hens make

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Jesse opened the door and saw the sun begin to rise although it was still quite dark. He heard a voice in the distance. It was female, singing a song. He looked at his phone. *6:14. Who is singing at this time?* he thought. He looked across the field. There was a girl with long, red hair wearing blue jeans and a white T-shirt. She was on a beautiful black horse. As she was riding the horse, she sang to it. *How strange*, he thought. Jesse always considered the animals as work. Instead, it looked like the horse was this girl's friend. She seemed happy to be out of bed so early—unlike Jesse. He would love to be sleeping right now, instead of walking towards his chickens, hens, pigs, sheep and cows. Actually, he dreamed of living in a tall building in the middle of a busy city, just like his Uncle Roger.

Uncle Roger had a great life, Jesse thought, a life Jesse hoped to have one day. He worked on Wall Street in New York City and had a modern apartment in a really tall building. From his living-room window, you could see the whole city.

Jesse sees a girl with red hair singing and riding a horse. She looks happy and Jesse does not know why—he is tired! He hopes to have a life in the city like his Uncle Roger one day.

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Whenever his uncle came to visit, he told Jesse stories about life in the Big Apple[1]—the city Jesse hoped to live in some day. Jesse always listened carefully to these stories. He wanted to know all of the details.

"Hey!" someone shouted. Jesse was suddenly awaken[2] from his thoughts of city living. He looked up. The singing girl with the red hair started walking towards him. *What did she want?* he thought. She smiled at him. When she reached him, she put out her hand. "Hi, I'm Harper!" Jesse looked at her but didn't say anything. He took her hand and shook it.

"I'm Jesse."

"Well, hello Jesse!" She breathed in the air and looked up at the blue sky, which was no longer dark. "Aaahhhhhh…nothing like fresh, clean air!" She looked at Jesse and said, "You are so lucky to live here all year round, in the middle of nature." Jesse started to wonder who this crazy girl was. "I'm just here for the summer. My grandmother invited me. She thought the fresh air would be

Jesse dreams about living in a city, like his uncle. The girl with the red hair walks over to Jesse. She introduces herself. She breathes in the air and says it is fresh and clean.

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Harper is happy to be outside early on her horse.

1 **Big Apple** another name for New York City

2 **awaken** stop dreaming

good for me. She's right. New York is too hot in the summer, anyway. Not much to do."

"You live in New York City?"

"Yeah." She pushed her hair out of her face. *Her eyes are as green as the field grass*, Jesse thought. "I haven't been up here since my grandparents bought the farm two years ago. My mom is not much of a country girl. Neither is my dad. I love nature—and animals!" Harper smiled at him. "You must love it here…"

Harper tells Jesse she lives in New York City but is visiting her grandmother for the summer. She also tells him how lucky he is to live on a farm. He disagrees and says there is not much where he lives.

"Not really…" He opened his arms and turned around. "I mean, look around. There's nothing here! Not a lot to love."

She looked surprised. "Are you kidding?" She raised her arms above her head. "With all of this beauty here, I feel like I am in paradise[1]! Much better than skyscrapers[2] and traffic and noise all day and night!"

Jesse started thinking about Uncle Roger and all of his crazy stories about city life. "My Uncle Roger lives in the city. If you ask me, you both are a lot luckier than I am! He has the craziest

1 **paradise** an ideal place

2 **skyscraper** a very tall building, usually found in a big city

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stories!" Jesse started feeding the chickens. "He works on Wall Street. I'm going to work on Wall Street one day, too. I can't wait to get out of this place!"

Jesse tells Harper about his Uncle Roger, who lives in the city. He also says he plans to move there.

Harper just looked at him with her eyes wide open as he continued his chores. *What a strange boy*, she thought to herself. She couldn't wait to leave the smog[1] and noise behind her.

"I'm going to do big things as soon as I finish school... no more chickens, that's for sure!" He threw the last bit of food at the animals and looked at the girl in front of him. He pushed his curly hair out of his eyes. "How old are you?"

Harper tells Jesse she is sixteen and Jesse says he will be seventeen next month. Jesse's mom tells him the state fair is next month.

"Sixteen. You?"

"Same, but I'll be seventeen in a month. Your grandma is a nice lady... She talks to my mom a lot about her garden."

Harper laughed. "She loves that garden! See you around!" She waved at him and ran back to her horse. Jesse turned and walked towards his house. His mother was waiting with breakfast.

"Jesse, the state fair[2] is next month. I was

1 **smog** cloud of pollution

2 **state fair** an annual meeting with competitions, animals, entertainment and food

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thinking you could enter one of our cows in the livestock competition…" She was holding a pan[1] of bacon in one hand and put her other hand on his shoulder. "It might be fun!"

"Ma, I don't mind helping out, but you know that animals and this farm are just not for me."

"I know. You can't wait to leave this place." She looked at her son with a smile on her face. "Hey, did you meet Harper?"

Jesse was finishing his bacon—his favorite part of breakfast. "You mean that crazy girl who sings to horses?" He let out a laugh. "Yeah, I met her…"

"She seems like a nice girl. Her grandmother says she loves horses and may enter a horse in a competition, too." Jesse's mother started washing the dishes as Jesse finished his eggs.

"Yeah, whatever. Any more eggs?" he asked.

Jesse's mother says he should enter one of the cows in a competition. He tells her he is not interested in the farm. She said she knows he cannot wait to leave.

Jesse tells his mother he has met Harper and thinks she is a crazy girl. His mother tells him she loves horses and may enter a horse in a competition at the fair.

Think

Do you think it is important to help your family around the house? Why? / Why not?

1 **pan** a metal container used for cooking food

Jesse is tired and hungry after doing his morning chores on the farm.

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Reading comprehension

1 Answer these questions about Chapter 1.

1 What did Jesse hear in the morning that he thought was strange?
2 Who is Uncle Roger?
3 What does Jesse dream of doing in the future?
4 When will Jesse be seventeen?
5 What does Mrs. Walston want Jesse to do at the state fair?

Vocabulary

2 Match the verbs below with their correct definitions.

1 ☐ wonder
2 ☐ ride
3 ☐ feed
4 ☐ wave
5 ☐ hope
6 ☐ invite
7 ☐ raise

a a feeling of desire for something to happen
b lift or move to a higher position
c make a friendly request to go somewhere or do something
d think, desire to know something
e sit on and control the movement of
f move one's hand in greeting, to say hello
g give food to



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Grammar

3 Complete the summary of Chapter 1 with the correct form of the verb — either the simple past or the past continuous — in parentheses.

Jesse (**1**) _____ (wake) up at six o'clock in the morning. His mom (**2**) _____ (call) him from the kitchen as he (**3**)_____ (leave) the house. While Jesse (**4**) _____ (feed) the chickens, he (**5**) _____ (hear) a girl singing. Jesse (**6**) _____ (dream) of living in the city one day. Harper (**7**) _____ (sing) to her horse while she (**8**) _____ (ride) her. Harper (**9**) _____ (shout) at Jesse and then (**10**) _____ (introduce) herself.

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Before-reading Activity • Chapter 2

Listening

3 **4 Listen to the beginning of Chapter 2. Are the sentences true or false? Correct the false ones.**

	T	F
1 Oliver, Jesse's best friend, lives on a dairy farm.	☐	☐
2 Jesse and Oliver met when they were two years old at the state fair.	☐	☐
3 Oliver has two older brothers.	☐	☐
4 In the future, Oliver wants to move to New York City.	☐	☐
5 Harper is spending the summer with her grandparents.	☐	☐
6 Harper is riding a blue bicycle.	☐	☐