

CHAPTER ONE: "A New Way"

The Biggest Little Farm has matured. John and Molly now face the hardest kind of balance: the emotional and practical weight of deciding what to fight for and what to let go of. Now, with their son Beaudie in tow, they learn when to let go and when to give things one more chance.

CHAPTER THEMES

- Knowing when to persist or let go
- Working with nature's life cycles, not against it
- The emotional costs and difficult decisions in farming

DISCUSSION SPARKS

"The balance of this farm relies on everything doing its part."

How do we define a living thing's contribution? Who decides what is useful?

"When it feels like we're being rejected by nature, maybe all it wants from us is a little creativity."

How do you use creativity to solve problems in your life?

"You'll know when you know."

What role does intuition play in decision-making versus data and evidence?

"Once we accept these changes that life forces on us, it opens up this freedom to chase an even better way."

Can you think of a change you initially resisted that led to somewhere better?

ACTIVITY

Pick one dilemma. Weigh the costs, benefits, and ethics, knowing that John and Molly believe the farm's balance depends on everyone doing their part. Discuss and defend your decision.

When do you persist and when do you let go?

- **MOE THE LAMB:** Was rejected by his mother. Keep fighting?
- **THE CHERRY TREES:** Were unproductive for years. Retire them?
- **BASIL THE GUARDIAN DOG:** She is aging and working alone. What role can she play now?

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

- **Science:** Gr. 3–8: Ecosystems, food webs, soil health, predator-prey dynamics. NGSS - LS2 and LS4-4
- **ELA:** Gr. 7-10: Time shifts in narrative, character development, metaphor. Common Core - RL.7–10.3–6, W.7–10.3, L.7–10.5a
- **SEL:** Gr. 6-10: CASEL's five competencies
- **Media Literacy:** Gr. 8-10: Common Core - RL/RI.8–12.6–7, SL.8–12.2, W.8–12.6