

Spotlight

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Are you in the midst of planning a family vacation? If so, I have two graphic novels perfect for helping you navigate through the joys and frustrations of travelling with relatives. Graphic novel artist Lucy Knisley has accomplished a lot at a young age and reading her travelogues *French Milk* and *Displacement* together offers a nice view of her evolution as an artist alongside comical and complicated recollections of two very different trips.

In the earlier work, *French Milk*, Lucy recounts a six week trip to France with her mother to mark two milestone birthdays (Lucy's 23rd, her mom's 50th). The journey comes across in a sweet, slapdash sort of way complete with photos, cartooning, and plenty of whimsy. Lucy confronts adulthood, love, and travel with her mother by her side. The book is an easy read celebrating the highs and lows of being in your early 20s and travelling with your mom – not to mention an excellent record of all that is delicious to eat in Paris.

Following up *French Milk* with *Displacement* allows the reader an inside look into the evolution of Knisley as an artist. Written seven years later, Knisley's drawing and writing style has matured while maintaining her whimsical touches. The story is more emotionally complex and sees Knisley accompanying her aging grandparents on a luxury cruise. Playing the role of caretaker to her beloved grandparents, who are both suffering from dementia, while negotiating roles and responsibilities in terms of their care with the rest of her family grants the reader an intimate look at show she confronts some of the hardest parts of being human – facing loss and the humiliations and struggles of old age. The book travels widely from the deck of a luxury cruise ship investigating mortality, familial responsibility, love, and the problematic elements of the cruise itself.

Both are quick reads and a great introduction to graphic novels if you have hesitated to explore the genre in the past. They also make great vacation reads for whatever your family holiday has in store. Happy travels!

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