

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## Lily's Crossing

by

### Patricia Reilly Giff

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### Book Information

Patricia Reilly Giff, Lily's Crossing  
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180 Pages  
Book Level: 4.6  
Interest Level: MG

During a summer spent at Rockaway Beach in 1944, Lily's friendship with a young Hungarian refugee causes her to see the war and her own world differently.

**Award:** ALA Notable/Best Books; Boston Globe/Horn Book Award/Honors; Jefferson Cup Award/Honor; Newbery Honor; State Award

**Topics:** Countries/Regions, United States; English in a Flash Recommended List, Library 3, Chapter 3, 90%; Interpersonal Relationships, Friendship; Natural Environments, Seashore/Beaches/Coast; READNOW - Demco Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 6-8; Recommended Reading, California Recommended Lit., English, 3-5; Recommended Reading, California Recommended Lit., English, 6-8; Recommended Reading, IRA/CBC Choice; Wars, World War II

### Main Characters

Albert an orphaned boy from Hungary, who is sent to live with his aunt and uncle for the summer

Gram Lily's grandmother, who lives with Lily and her father

Lily Mollahan a young girl living with her father and grandmother during World War II

Margaret Dillon Lily's best friend at Rockaway, where her family spends their summers

Poppy Lily's widowed father, who is sent to Europe to help rebuild after the war

### Vocabulary

**barnacles** a marine crustacean that, as an adult, is fixed to rocks or other objects

**cicadas** insects related to the aphids, with wide blunt heads and transparent wings

**convoy** a group of moving vehicles (especially ships) with or without an escort

**hoysden** a girl or woman with saucy, boisterous, or carefree behavior

**paratroopers** members of a troop trained to parachute from an airplane

### Synopsis

Lily's mother died when Lily was very young, so she lives with her grandmother and father now. Lily and her grandmother spend the summers at Gram's home on Rockaway Beach. This summer, Lily's best friend at Rockaway, Margaret, moves to Detroit because her father is needed in the factories to build warplanes. Lily's father is sent to Europe as an engineer to help rebuild after World War II. Lily finds herself alone and lonely at Rockaway until she befriends Albert, the nephew of her Rockaway neighbors, the Orbans. Albert is an orphan from Hungary who was sent away with his sister, Ruth, during the war to live with relatives in Canada. For the summer, however, he comes to Rockaway. Lily and Albert become very close friends as they share their innermost thoughts with one another. Lily tries to teach Albert how to swim, and the two of them care for a cat in Margaret's parents' house.

Throughout the summer, Lily worries about her father, Albert worries about his sick sister who he left behind in France, and Margaret worries about her missing brother who was a soldier at Normandy Beach. Eventually Lily realizes that her father is in France, where she writes to him about Albert's sister. Lily's father is able to find Ruth and bring word to Albert that she is all right.

At one point over the summer, Lily learns the great danger in lying when she tells Albert that she is going to swim to the convoy ships and go to Europe to find her father. Though he can't swim, Albert rows out toward the ships and is caught in a storm. Lily sees him and rows out to save him. She then

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decides she must no longer lie.

The summer ends, and Lily spends the long winter with Gram at home. In the spring her father returns. The next summer she returns to Rockaway and happily finds that Albert has also returned, with his sister.

### Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

#### Initial Understanding

List two ways in which Lily showed Albert that she cared about him.

*She asked her father to look for his sister, Ruth. She gave him one of the stars from her mother. She tried to teach him how to swim. She played "The Blue Danube" on the piano for him.*

#### Literary Analysis

Though the vast majority of World War II occurred overseas, life in the United States was affected by the war. Give some examples of how life was affected in the United States.

*Though there are many more, here are some of the examples mentioned in the story: Factories made parts and machines for the war. Food was in short supply, so people ate things such as Spam. The government was concerned the war would enter the country, so they had lights covered with black-out curtains.*

#### Inferential Comprehension

What was Poppy's response to Ruth's concern that she hadn't said good-bye to Albert? Why did Poppy share this story with Lily?

*He told her that what mattered was the time they had spent together before they were separated. Poppy told Lily about this story so she would not feel bad about not having said good-bye to him.*

#### Constructing Meaning

What was meant by the phrase, "Loose Lips Sink Ships"?

*During World War II, the Germans had submarines that could sink ships in the ocean. American citizens were told to be very careful with military information they knew because if it got into the wrong hands, U.S. troop and supply ships could be sunk.*

### Teachable Skills

**Understanding Hist./Cultural Factors** Even though she wasn't a soldier, Lily's life was affected by the war. Many people who were children during World War II have strong memories of the war years. Have the students invite older relatives or neighbors who lived during that time to share their experiences and memories with the class. Students could also interview and report on the stories of someone who lived through the war.

**Making Predictions** As the story closes, Lily is reunited with her friend Albert and meets Albert's sister, Ruth. Knowing what Albert and Lily did the summer before and how close they became as friends, have the students write a prediction of what the three children might do that summer.

**Recognizing Details** In this story, the author cleverly has Lily's father reveal where he is through the book titles that he mentions to Lily in his letters. Poppy must do this in a secretive way, because he is not supposed to reveal his location through his letters. Have the students pick a location in the school, town, country, or world and then cleverly reveal the location through written hints. Have the students exchange papers and try to determine the locations being referred to in the hints.

**Responding to Literature** When her best friend moved away, Lily found herself in a situation where she either needed to make new friends or spend the summer alone. Luckily she met and befriended Albert. When the summer was over, she often wrote about her new friend in her journal. Her teacher told her how lucky she was

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to have such a friend, even if it was for just one summer. Have the students write about one special friend they have had. Ask them to include things they did with their friend.