

Lily's Crossing

by Patricia Reilly Giff

The summer of 1944 starts like all the others Lily remembers with a trip to her gram's house near the beach in Rockaway, but this summer things are not the same. Her friend Margaret leaves for Detroit, her father goes to Europe to help with the war effort, and a strange boy named Albert comes to stay next door.

THEMES

problem-solving, family, friendship, responsibility, courage, truth

I. PRE-TEACHING

A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:

tongue, duration, wrenching, molding, ivory, baseboard, butterscotch, blaring, engineer, parachuting, blackout, paratroopers, pilings, cobblestones, trestle, flounder, cathedral, boardwalk, silencer, vibration, kerosene, sodden, triangular, convoy, destroyers, caulking, marquee, lukewarm, freighter, vaguely, rustle, turrets, pew, faucet, wharf, hoyden, mazurkas, manicure, goulash, ridiculous, liberate, irritable, whitecaps, veered, boulevard, breakers, afghan, spidery, convent, galumphing,

B. Before beginning the story, discuss with the class the following questions:

1. Have you ever had a good friend move away? How did you feel? Did you keep in touch?
2. What would it have been like to be a child in America during World War II?
3. Have you ever told a lie just to make yourself sound important? What can happen when we tell even small lies?

II. PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Story:

1. Begin with Chapters 1-9: Why is it so important for Lily to get the star off her wall? How does she feel about Gram? How does she feel when Margaret leaves? What gift does Margaret give her? What are some precautions people had to take because of the war? Describe Albert the first time Lily sees him. What news does Lily's father tell her? Why doesn't she say goodbye to him? Why is Gram mad at her? What does she learn about Albert at dinner? Why does Albert laugh at her?
2. Advance to Chapters 10-18: What brings Lily and Albert together? What does Margaret tell her about Detroit? How does Lily feel as she and Albert watch the movie? How does Albert feel? What makes her decide to tell Albert about the stars on her wall? Why were Albert's parents killed? Why was Ruth left in France? What's strange about Lily's father's letter? How does she hope to get the picture to Margaret? What does Albert

remember about Nagimamma? What does Lily realize about her lies?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 19-28: How do they get Eddie's picture sent to Margaret? What problem does Lily have teaching Albert to swim? What does Margaret's letter make her realize? How does Lily hope to get out of taking Albert to Europe? What does Lily realize about the books her father has been mentioning? How do they hope to find Ruth? Why do Lily and Albert have a fight? How has Lily changed a year later? What is different going back this year? How does Lily know Albert is still there?

B. For Discussion:

1. Why does Lily tell lies? What happens that makes her realize how serious her lies are?
2. Why does Lily have such a hard time accepting Gram? How do they finally come to accept and show their love for each other?
3. If there had been no war, how would Lily's life have been different?
4. How do Lily and Albert become good friends? How does their friendship change them?
5. In what ways do stars serve as symbols in the story? What other symbols can you find?

III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give wide leeway in working with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

A. Language Arts:

1. Caught up in the drama of the war going on in Europe, Lilly tells whopping lies that people seem to believe. Have students talk about lies. What is the harm in telling lies? They might write about a lie they have told and what happened.
2. Have students write about a friend who moved away. What did they miss about this friend? How did they make new friends?
3. Have students write about a secret they needed to keep. What was it important to keep the secret? How long were they able to keep it?

4. Have students design a scavenger hunt in the library using titles of books the way Lily's father tells her he's in France. They might make up a coded message from book titles.
5. Have students keep a journal of their thoughts each day. Ask them to share those they feel are important

B. Art and Music:

1. Have students select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. They might use scales or a simple piano concerto for when Lily is practicing, World War II popular songs, like "Mairsy Dotes," "The Last Time I Saw Paris," and "The Blue Danube" for when Lily is alone or with Albert.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They might show Rockaway with its beach and beach houses on stilts, scenes from World War II, a picture of Paprika, the kitten, a key like the one to Margaret's apartment, stickers of stars, letters from Margaret and Poppy, covers from the books mentioned, a piano scale book and simple pieces, a picture of a young man like Eddie, candy wrappers, the French flag, and other items mentioned in the story.
3. Have students listen to old time radio programs. What were some popular shows of the 1940s? What would it have been like not to have television?

C. Social Studies:

1. Have students learn about the home front during World War II. What was a "victory garden"? Why was it difficult to buy butter? What foods were rationed? Why was gasoline rationed? Why didn't people buy new cars? Why did windows need blackout curtains? How did the people at home contribute to the war effort?
2. Have students learn more about D-Day. Where did the invasion take place? How many troops were involved? Why was it important to the war effort?
3. Have students learn about how airplanes, tanks, guns, and other needed war equipment was built during World War II. How did we arm for war so quickly?
4. Have students learn how we helped Europe rebuild after the war. Why wasn't eastern Europe rebuilt until many years later?
5. Have students find Hungary and France on a map. They might trace the journey Albert and his sister Ruth took

to escape the Nazis. They might also locate the Danube.

D. Science and Math:

1. From her bedroom on the porch, Lily is able to see the stars. Have students learn about constellations like the Big Dipper, Orion's belt, and "the W of Cassiopeia." What other constellations can they find? How do constellations help us make sense of the stars? Why has it become more difficult to see the stars?
2. Albert has beach shoes because of the barnacles. Have students find out about barnacles. What kind of sea life are they? Why do they cling to rocks? Why are they sharp? What might happen if you cut your foot on one?
3. Lily was told that her mother's heart was "too big." Have students find out about an enlarged heart. Why might this cause death?

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