

Lily's Crossing by Patricia Reilly Giff

Dear Rising Sixth Grade Parents and Students,

Summer provides the perfect opportunity for students and families to enjoy great books together! The goal of middle school summer reading is to foster a love of reading. Reading over the summer can also help students maintain or even improve their reading skills.

This summer, the students will read [Lily's Crossing by Patricia Reilly Giff](#).

Students will need to read the book, but also understand that their first graded assignment in the fall will be to complete a 'Book Talk'. We will be discussing the book and the 'Book Talk' expectations during the first week back to school.

Finally, the last page of this document provides some background information about World War II. Please review this information prior to reading your book in order to better understand the historical context.

Assignment

For each of the chapters, there are four questions provided. You must choose at least 2 questions per chunk of chapters to respond to in written form.

Written Response Expectations

Written responses to questions must be written in complete sentences with correct punctuation and capitalization. Make sure to answer ALL parts of each question you choose. Additionally, you are expected to support your answers with text evidence.

Remember, these questions are intended to encourage critical thinking and analysis of the novel. Feel free to expand on your answers.

Additionally, there are 5 Questions to Think About at the end of this document that I would like you to consider. We will be discussing these questions in depth once you return to school.

Chapter Questions for Written Response

Chapters 1-4

1. Why do you think Lily told lies?
2. In what ways do you think the war changed the lives of Lily, her family, and their acquaintances?
3. How would you describe Lily's relationship with her father and with her grandmother?
4. Flashback—A flashback is a scene showing events that happened at an earlier time.
Describe the brief flashback concerning Eddie in Chapter Three.

Chapters 5-9

1. Do you think Lily's reaction to her father's news was justified? Explain.
2. Do you think that Gram belonged on Lily's problem list? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think that Lily was now telling more lies instead of fewer as she had vowed?
4. Simile—A simile is a figure of speech in which a comparison between two unlike objects is stated directly using the words "like" or "as."

For example: *The days stretched out in front of her like long gray sheets on a wash line.*

What is being compared? In what way does the simile help express Lily's feelings?

Chapters 10-13

1. Why do you think that Lily lied to Albert? Do you think this was okay? Explain.
2. Do you think Albert's anger toward his family was justified? Why or why not?
3. In your opinion, why did Albert accept each of Lily's challenges?
4. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are compared. The comparison can be implied or it can be stated directly.

For example: *A little [cream] stayed on his lower lip, a small yellow fish.*

What is being compared? In what way does this comparison help you visualize the scene?

Chapters 14-18

1. Why didn't Lily confess her lie about swimming the Atlantic to Albert?
2. Why do you think Lily seemed to resent her grandmother?
3. Why do you think Albert offered Lily the money she needed? What does this reveal about his character?
4. Literary Device: Metaphor

What is being compared in the following metaphor? *It was a desert in that church.*
What does this tell you about the atmosphere in the church?

Chapters 19-22

1. Why did Lily conclude that things would never be the same after the war?

2. Do you think that Lily's discoveries about Gram will cause her to treat Gram in a different way? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that Albert's "lie" can be compared to Lily's lies? Explain.
4. Why do you think Lily's father told her to read a book called *The Promise* when there was no book by that title?

Chapters 23-28

1. What character traits did Lily possess that allowed her to make a daring rescue?
2. Why did Lily have mixed feelings about returning to Rockaway the summer of 1945?
3. Why do you think that Albert needed the "dream" of going to Europe to find Ruth?
4. At the end of the novel, why do you think that Lily was able to put her arms around Gram and say that she loved her?

Questions to Think About

These questions will serve as topics for discussion upon your return. Please jot down some notes so that you can be prepared for discussion.

1. How does Lily's relationship with her father evolve throughout the story, and what role does their bond play in Lily's growth and development?
2. Explore the theme of friendship in the novel, particularly focusing on Lily and Albert's friendship. How do their different backgrounds and experiences shape their relationship, and what do they learn from each other?
3. The novel is set during World War II. Discuss how the setting influences the characters' lives and decisions. How do the war and its effects impact Lily, Albert, and their families?
4. Lily carries a secret throughout the story related to her mother. How does this secret affect Lily's behavior and relationships, and what does it reveal about her character?

5. Consider the significance of the novel's title, "Lily's Crossing." What does the "crossing" represent, both literally and metaphorically, for Lily and the other characters? How do they navigate the challenges and transitions they face throughout the story?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

World War II

The War Abroad

World War II was one of the largest and bloodiest conflicts in history. It began in 1939 and lasted until 1945, involving more than 60 million soldiers from 40 countries. On one side were the Allies made up of Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. On the other side were the Axis powers made up of Germany, Japan, and Italy.

Partly responsible for the war were the humiliating peace treaties forced on Germany after World War I. Adolph Hitler became an important figure in the early 1930s during a time when poverty and unemployment were plaguing Germany. This made conditions ripe for his National Socialist German Worker's Party—the Nazi Party—to rise to power. Promising to make Germany strong again, Hitler used the Jewish people as scape-goats for all of Germany's problems. After becoming the absolute dictator of Germany on February 28, 1933, not only was he free to persecute the Jews and other minorities, but he also began a campaign to conquer neighboring countries.

Other nations watched the German army invade Austria and Czechoslovakia but did nothing to stop them. However, when Hitler invaded Poland in August 1939, France and Britain immediately declared war on Germany. This was the beginning of World War II.

In the early 1940s, the war raged on. Germany conquered France in 1940. In 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union, bringing that nation into the war. On December 7 of that same year, Japan attacked the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor in the Pacific Ocean. The United States now joined the Allies in their fight against the Axis powers. In 1943, the Allied invasion of Italy forced that country to surrender and join the Allies.

The final Allied campaign began on June 6, 1944. On that day, known as D-Day, the Allies launched the Normandy invasion on the beaches of northern France. In August, a second force landed in southern France. By late 1944, Belgium and France were liberated, and the war had been carried into Germany. In February 1945, after many bloody battles, Allied victory seemed certain. In April 1945, after Hitler had killed himself, German resistance had collapsed. Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945. Japan surrendered a few months later, thereby bringing an end to the costliest war in history.

The Homefront

During World War II, the life of Americans at home was transformed by necessary sacrifices. Between 1941 and 1945, six and a half million women entered the labor force to take the place of men sent to the battlefield. This was a hardship for many women who suddenly found themselves holding down jobs while caring for their families.

Many families tended Victory Gardens in order to have a homegrown supply of fruits and vegetables while American troops would receive produce from commercial farmers. By 1942, one-third of the homefront supply of vegetables came from the Victory Gardens. This food source helped make up for shortages of other foods caused by food rationing.

Rationing meant that Americans could only receive a limited supply of certain foods and other items. There were a total of twenty rationed items, including sugar, butter, coffee, rubber, nylon, and gasoline. These rationed items were considered necessary for the continued war effort. Gasoline was reduced to three gallons per week for most drivers. Shortages such as this were a fact of life during the war.

Another fact of life accepted by Americans after Pearl Harbor was that The United States could be successfully attacked. This fear united Americans in protecting their mainland. They were careful to watch for spies, aircraft, and vessels along coastal waters. If enemy aircraft were spotted, civil defense teams were ready to enforce blackouts. During a blackout, all lights were put out or covered up as a protection against an air raid.