

TWO-TIME NEWBERY HONOR-WINNING AUTHOR

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YEARLING



Lily's Crossing





Chapter 1

ST. ALBANS, 1944

Lily Mollahan's bedroom was at the top of the stairs, the only one on the second floor. "The top of the house," Gram always told her, "the top of the world."

Lily sank back on her heels to look around at the blue walls and ceiling, and the gold stars pasted on here and there. Then she stretched up again, working with Poppy's paint scraper, to peel off a star that was almost beyond her reach.

She was hot and sticky, the temperature at least ninety

degrees, and Gram, who didn't have one bit of patience, was calling from the kitchen for the tenth time.

"Your father will be home in just a few minutes, and the table isn't set."

As if Lily didn't know it was dinnertime. Even Mrs. Curley halfway down 200th Street would be able to smell that cabbage cooking. "I thought you wanted me to finish packing," Lily called back as loudly as she could, to drown out the radio in the kitchen.

She could hardly breathe in that bedroom, Lily thought, glancing around again; she could hardly walk. Things were pulled out all over the floor, waiting to be stuffed into her suitcase: books, papers with stories she had written, bathing suits, and heaps of clothes Gram had put on the bed.

She had even found an old silver mirror of her mother's she had hidden away in back of the closet last winter. She was going to put it carefully on top of the suitcase in a nest of pajamas. It would be a miracle if she ever got that far, though, if everything got itself sorted out, and packed, and if they made it to the house in Rockaway before her birthday on Monday.

"Rockaway." She said it aloud, loving the sound of it on her tongue. Rockaway and the ocean were waiting for her. The summer without homework . . . to write stories for herself and not Sister Eileen. The summer without a piano to practice every afternoon. Days and days to sneak into the movies with her best friend, Margaret.

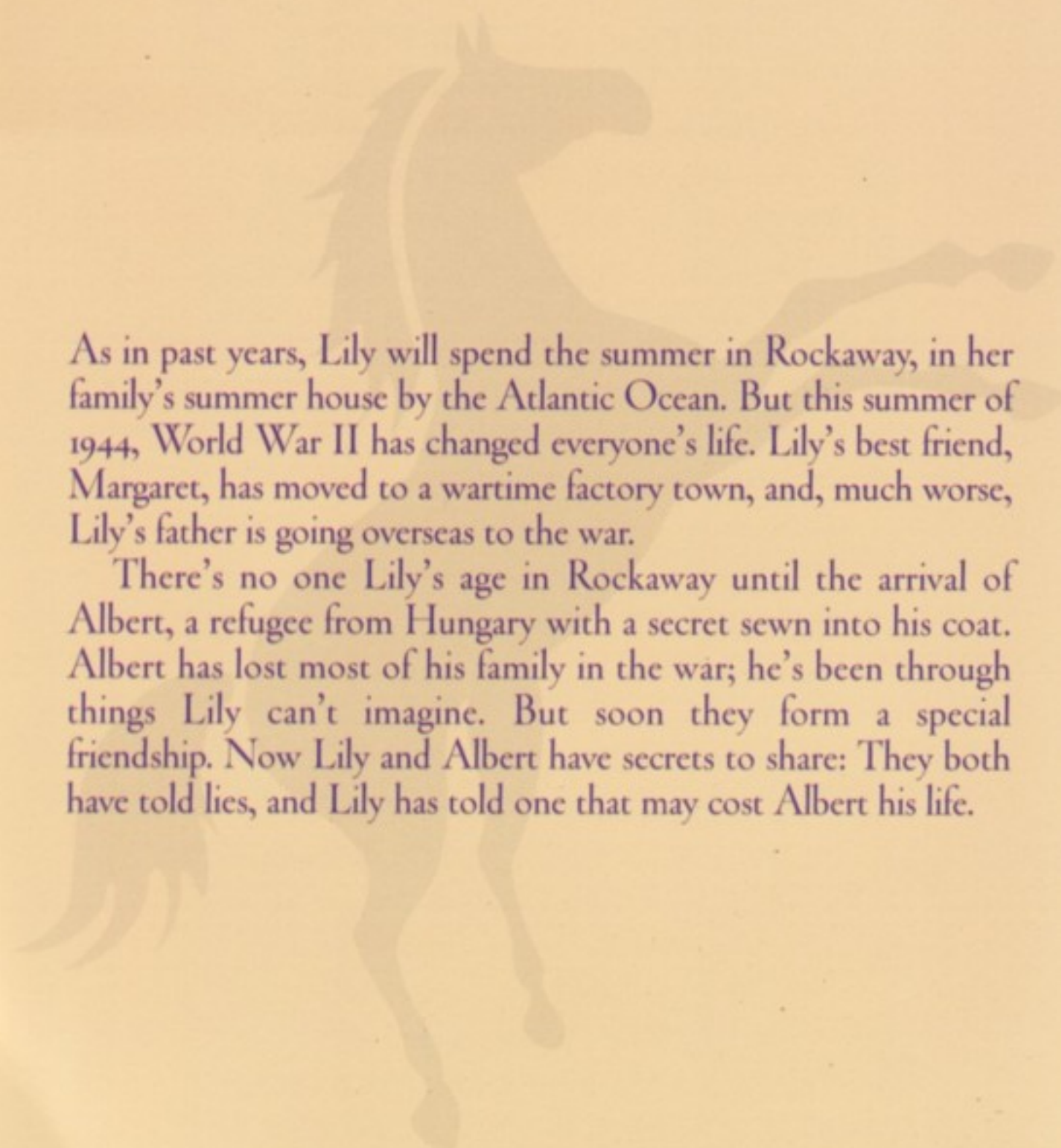
Gram was at the bottom of the stairs now, the six o'clock news blaring from the radio behind her. War news, about D-Day. The invasion of France by the Allies a couple of weeks ago. That was all anybody talked about. No, not quite. Sister Eileen was much more interested in whether the class had rosaries and clean handkerchiefs in their pockets than in who was going to win the war.

Too bad about Sister Eileen. Lily would be out of St. Albans in four days, and Sister Eileen would still be stuck there in St. Pascal's thinking about everyone's clean handkerchiefs.

"Lily? You're not packed yet?" Gram called. "I thought you'd finished an hour ago. And remember we don't have that much room in the car."

"Almost finished," Lily said, and "almost started," under her breath. And there, with another slide of the paint scraper, the star came off the wall in one piece, drifting into her outstretched palm. It was perfect, the points still as sharp as when they were new. The star she had scraped off last year had torn a little, and . . .

Lily turned it over. A trace of glue was still on the back. She put her mouth against it, a kiss. Her mother had been the last one to touch that spot when she had pasted it up for her years ago. She had still been Baby Elizabeth then . . . no one had called her Lily yet, and her mother had been alive . . . "playing the piano with you on her lap," Poppy had told her once, "dancing in the



As in past years, Lily will spend the summer in Rockaway, in her family's summer house by the Atlantic Ocean. But this summer of 1944, World War II has changed everyone's life. Lily's best friend, Margaret, has moved to a wartime factory town, and, much worse, Lily's father is going overseas to the war.

There's no one Lily's age in Rockaway until the arrival of Albert, a refugee from Hungary with a secret sewn into his coat. Albert has lost most of his family in the war; he's been through things Lily can't imagine. But soon they form a special friendship. Now Lily and Albert have secrets to share: They both have told lies, and Lily has told one that may cost Albert his life.

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