

Guided Reading Questions for *The Brass Compass*
By Ellen Butler

- 1) What did you think of the title *The Brass Compass*? Why do you think the author chose this title? Do you feel the compass played an important enough part of the story to use it as the novel's title? Can you think of a different title?

- 2) Did you find the plot engaging? What kind of emotions did the story evoke as you read—interest, sadness, anger, joy? What would you have changed? What history or storyline did you want more of? Less?

- 3) Many WWII soldiers brought home foreign brides and there are stories of OSS agents finding love within the agency. What do you think of Lily and Charlie's love story? How difficult would it be for you to be married to someone who worked for the government and kept secrets from you because of national security purposes?

- 4) Discuss the dynamics between the characters as they relate to Lily—Charlie, Devlin, Glassman, Feinberg, Colette, Camilla, and her parents. Who is your favorite character? Who is your least favorite character? Why?

- 5) At one point, Lily calls Masselin an enigma. Is that a good description? Discuss your feelings toward him. What do you think his motivations were? Was he a good, bad, or something in between? Do you believe he would have helped her?

- 6) Were there scenes or passages that you found insightful or profound? Was there a snippet of dialog that you found captures a particular character's essence? Is there a passage or scene that made you cry or laugh out loud?

- 7) Throughout the book we see flashbacks to Lily's earlier life, before the war. What do you think of that life? Is that a life you can connect to? In the end, General Magruder called Lily resourceful and impulsive. Did she change to become the spy, or do you think her personality was always impetuous, resourceful, and secretive? Do you believe Lily when she tells Charlie she wants to settle down and have children, or do you think she will be drawn back into the life of spying?

- 8) Do you think you could live the life of a spy, constantly keeping secrets from friends and neighbors and those you love? Does deception come easily to you?