**Diary of a Waitress
by Carolyn Meyer**

**About the Book**

In 1926, droves of Americans traveled by train across the United States to visit the West. They ate at Harvey Houses, where thousands of well–trained waitresses provided first–class service. The Waitresses: The Journal of a Harvey Girl tells the first–person story of one spunky girl, Kitty Evans, as she faces the often funny and painful experiences she and fellow waitresses Cordelia and Emmy endure. As Kitty writes about her escapades, a loveable teenager emerges; she embraces adventure, independence, her position as a Harvey Girl, and a freelance writing career. In this fast-paced novel, best–selling author Carolyn Meyer, who has visited and researched several Harvey Hotels, brings together an unforgettable heroine with the universal themes of friendship, identity, and young love.

**About the Author**

Carolyn Meyer was born in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, in 1935. In high school, she served as editor of her high school newspaper and yearbook, and spent her summers writing radio advertisements. In 1957 she graduated cum laude from Bucknell University with a degree in English, only to find that because she was a woman, good jobs were in short supply. She moved to New York, where she worked as a secretary; then she got married, had children, and moved to suburban Connecticut. But Meyer kept writing, publishing her first story in a secretarial magazine - in shorthand. (No one in her family could read it.) She wrote columns for*McCall's* magazine, and finally published her first book for children, a nonfiction book about sewing, in 1969. She wrote several more books on crafts before branching out to write about craftspeople.

After her divorce in 1973, Meyer began traveling to research her books, and she developed a love for moving and finding out about her subjects first-hand. She became known for her journalistic books for children, books that shed light on lesser-known ways of life, for example: *Amish People: Plain Living in a Complex World*, and*Eskimos: Growing Up in a Changing Culture*. She visited South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Japan to write about children's lives in those countries. She also began writing novels for young people. Meanwhile, she also moved her home, living in Pennsylvania, New York, New Mexico, and Texas.

The mother of four, Meyer now lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with her husband, poet and historian E. A. Mares. Meyer continues to challenge herself in her writing, and has recently written two well-received entries in the acclaimed series The Royal Diaries.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why do Kitty’s parents treat her differently than her brother Howard?
2. What sort of criticism do the girls receive for being Harvey Girls? What does this treatment say about society’s view of women in 1926?
3. Describe Kitty, Cordelia, and Emmy. How are they different? How are they the same?
4. Did Kitty’s adventures help her become more mature?
5. How do the places Kitty visits change her point of view?
6. Is it important to the plot that the story is written as a diary, from Kitty’s point of view?

**If you enjoyed *The Waitress*:**

* *How It Happened in Peach Hill* by Marthe Jocelyn
* *Vixen (The Flappers)* by Jillian Larkin
* *White Lilacs* by Carolyn Meyer
* *Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman
* *The Voyage of the Continental* by Katherine Kilpatrick
* *Letters from Vinnie* by Maureen Stack Sappey