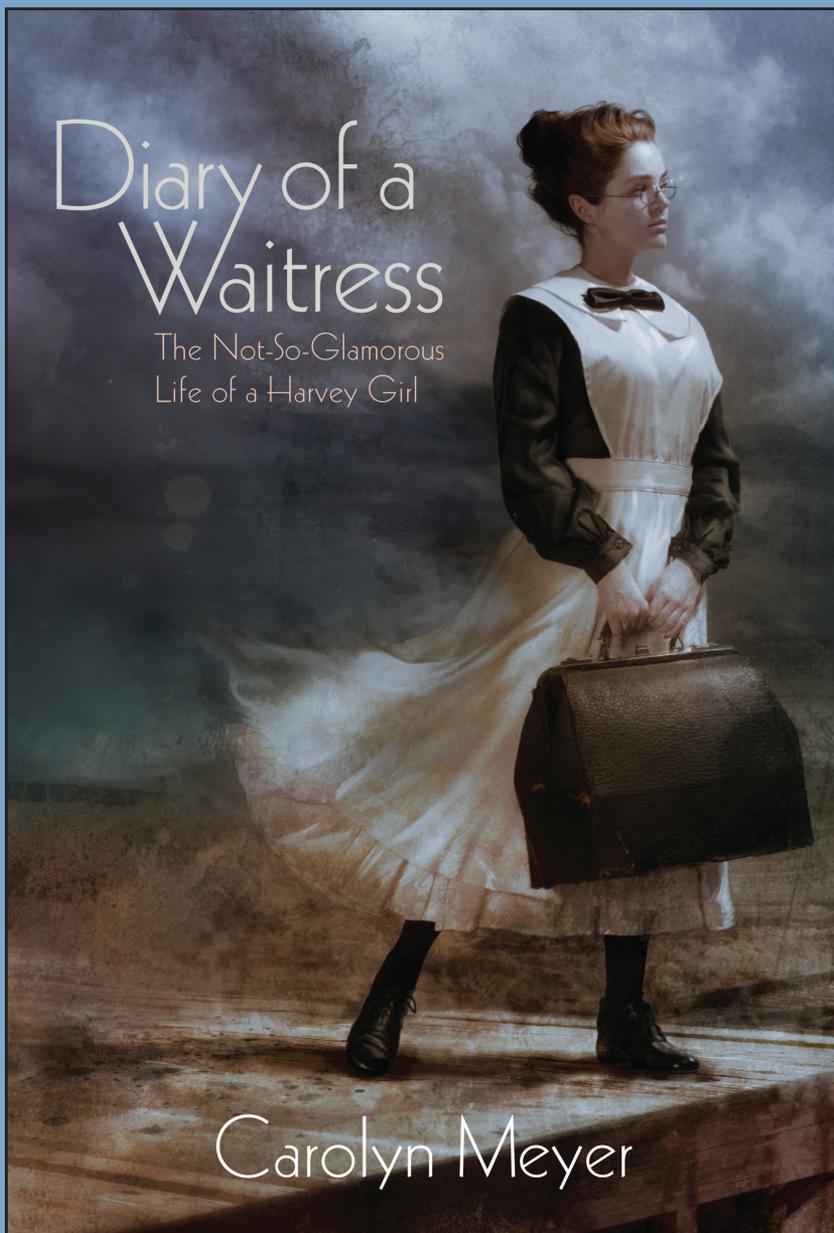


# Educator's Guide



 CALKINS CREEK

 BOYD'S MILLS PRESS

Highlights

## About the Book

When Kitty Evans's plans for college fall through, she doesn't take her father's advice and get a job selling shoes. Instead, she answers an ad in the paper and sets out on a faraway adventure.

If she can't get the degree in journalism she's planned, she'll just begin reporting in the diary her grandmother gave her as a high school graduation present.

Kitty earns a job as a Harvey Girl, leaving her home in Leavenworth, Kansas, for a life of serving travelers along the rail lines that crisscross the American Southwest. An aspiring reporter, Kitty documents her every experience, from the singular beauty of the scenery to the intriguing people she meets and the trouble they get into.

Along the way, Kitty meets some new best friends—Cordelia and Emmy—who, like her, are earning money as Harvey Girls as they figure out who they are and what they want to do with their lives. Together, they tackle the trials of new friendships, young love, being strangers in a foreign land, and dealing with news (or no news) from back home. And they do it all while maintaining the fine standards of the Harvey Eating Houses—it's the Harvey Way!



This guide is designed to help teachers lead students in a close reading of *Diary of a Waitress: The Not-So-Glamorous Life of a Harvey Girl* by Carolyn Meyer. Connections to the Common Core State Standards are noted with each activity.

### **Common Core abbreviations used in this guide:**

**RL – Reading: Literature**

**W – Writing**

**SL – Speaking & Listening**

**RH – Literacy in History and Social Studies**



## Before Reading

***Build a basis for deep understanding of the text by discussing setting and genre.***

- Have students research Leavenworth, Kansas, where Kitty grew up. What is it like? What was it like in 1926? How is Leavenworth, Kansas, different and the same from the students' hometowns? [SL.6.1.A, SL.6.2, W.6.7]
- Share a timeline of American history either in a handout or projected on a screen. The timeline should focus on the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Have students point out events on the timeline and explain what they know about them. Create a picture in the students' minds of American life in 1926. [SL.6.1.A, SL.6.2, W.6.7]
- Ask students if they have ever kept a diary or journal and their reasons why or why not. How does writing in a journal help people to look at their lives differently? [SL.6.1.A, W.6.10]
- Have students start a journal about their reading of *Diary of a Waitress*. Either provide small notebooks or have students write their entries in an online blogging application. Show students how Kitty labels each post with the date and sometimes adds her location. Instruct them to start each post the same way. Give students some time to write their first entry. Supply these questions as guidance for writing the entry:
  - What do you think this story will be about? What do you expect to happen?
  - Flip through the pages of the book. How is it organized? How does the author divide the story into smaller sections?
  - What do you think about the story and character of Kitty based on the cover?
  - How do the pictures included throughout the text help you to understand and visualize when and where the story takes place? [W.6.4, W.6.10]



## During Reading

***Quick Questions to Check Reading Comprehension***

- What motivates Kitty to apply to become a Harvey Girl? [RL.6.1, RL.6.3]
- Does Kitty's family support her decision to become a Harvey Girl? Explain your answer with supporting evidence from the text. [RL.6.1, RL.6.3]
- Describe the relationship between Kitty and her brother, Howie. Are they close? Do they get along? Cite lines from the text that support your answer. [RL.6.1, RL.6.3]

- Why is Cordelia’s cousin Violet upset that Cordelia is hired as a Harvey Girl? [RL.6.1, RL.6.3]
- How does Kitty’s time as a Harvey Girl help her to realize her dream of becoming a reporter? In what other ways does working as a Harvey Girl change her life? [RL.6.1, RL.6.3, RL.6.5, RL.6.6]

### *In-depth Questions for Thinking about the Text*

Why is the journal such a popular form for writing novels? From which point of view are diaries usually told? Why? What details do you get the most of when you’re reading a diary? (*the narrator’s feelings and thoughts*) Which details are harder to convey in the diary form? (*other characters’ feelings*) [RL.6.9]

Describe Kitty, Cordelia, and Emmy. How are they different? How are they the same? Have students imagine that the three characters live in modern times and have social media accounts. What sort of things would each girl post? Students should support their ideas with lines from the text. [RL.6.1, RL.6.3, RL.6.6]

What sort of criticism do the girls receive for being Harvey Girls? From whom does the criticism come? What does this treatment say about society’s view of women in 1926? How do Kitty’s parents treat her and Howie differently, and how does this illustrate people’s beliefs about women in 1926? [RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.5]

How is learning about history from novels different from learning about history from textbooks or videos? What can one person’s fictional story tell readers about the past that an objective informational text cannot? [RL.6.1, RL.6.7]



### Post-Reading Discussion Questions

Have students work in pairs or small groups to summarize Kitty’s story in *Diary of a Waitress*. Compare the groups’ summaries. What are the differences and similarities? Ask students to explain how they chose which details were most important to include in the summary. [RL.6.1, RL.6.2, SL.6.1.A]

Did Kitty’s adventure help her to become more mature? How does traveling help young people to expand their horizons and learn more about the world? [RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, SL.6.1.A]

Have you ever dreamed about going someplace else? Where? How do the places Kitty visits change her point of view? [RL.6.1, RL.6.6, SL.6.1.A]

## Vocabulary

On page 120, Mrs. McCreary says that Kitty’s two years of Latin classes will help her understand and learn Spanish. Why is this true? What does Kitty do throughout the text to learn Spanish and build her vocabulary? [RL.6.1, RL.6.4, L.6.6, RH.6-8.4, SL.6.1.A]



## Close Reading

Have students reread pages 122–139, considering the following questions:

- Why does the Santa Fe Railroad want people to feel like they’re in another country while traveling through Belén?
- How does Kitty react to being exposed to new experiences and people?
- How will her behavior help her to be a good reporter?
- What can readers infer about Kitty’s personality by reading these pages?
- How are the girls’ reactions to meeting the railroaders different from each other? What do their reactions show about their personalities?
- After allowing students to reread and write notes about these pages, discuss the questions above, encouraging students to refer to their notes and to quote lines from the text that support their answers.

[RL.6.1, RL.6.1, RL.6.5, SL.6.1.A]



## Group Research Activities

In pairs or small groups, students should research some historical detail from the text that they want to know more about. Some possibilities for topics are Harvey Houses, Western movies like *The Great K & A Train Robbery*, Mary Pickford, or flappers. After students learn some background knowledge on their topics, they should present their findings to the class. Follow with a discussion in which students discuss how what they learned relates to the book. [RL.6.1, W.6.7, RH.6-8.9, SL.6.1.A, SL.6.4]

Project a map of the United States in front of the class or provide students with handouts. Have students refer to the book in order to trace Kitty’s journey on the map. Was Kitty’s journey as far as they imagined, or farther? [RL.6.3, SL.6.1.A, SL.6.2]



## Writing Activities

Choose a scene from the text and rewrite it from another character's perspective—anyone other than Kitty. Put yourself in the other character's shoes. What would have been important to him or her in the scene?

**[W.6.3, W.6.4]**

While students are reading the text, provide journal-writing time at regular intervals so that students can record their feelings and thoughts about reading the book as they progress. Encourage students to add to their journals whenever they realize or enjoy something in the text. They should also jot down questions they have about the text and details they think might come up in class discussions. **[RL.6.1, RL.6.3, W.6.9.A]**

Imagine that you are leaving home to set off on an adventure like Kitty's. Where would you go? How would you get there? What sort of work would you do to support yourself? Write a diary entry in the style of Kitty's, documenting all of the details of the adventure you'd like to embark on.

**[W.6.3, W.6.4]**

## Extra Credit

Have students choose one of the allusions in the book to music or literature and listen to or read it. Some possibilities are Robert Service's poem "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" or the songs "Bye, Bye, Blackbird" and "I Love You Truly." Play the songs for the students or have one or more students perform Service's poem as Gus and his friends did. Follow with a discussion about what the songs and poetry of a time period can tell us about the era. **[RL.6.1, SL.6.4]**

Have students research Belén, New Mexico, and what it was like in 1926. After allowing some time for research, ask students get out their notes about Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1926. How were the places different? What sorts of things probably seemed very strange and new to Kitty?  
**[RH.6-8.1, W.6.7]**



## Further Reading

Books Set in Kitty's Time Period:

*How It Happened in Peach Hill* by Marthe Jocelyn

*Vixen (The Flappers)* by Jillian Larkin

*White Lilacs* by Carolyn Meyer

YA Historical Fiction Diaries:

*Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman

*The Voyage of the Continental* by Katherine Kilpatrick

*Letters from Vinnie* by Maureen Stack Sappéy

Diary of a Waitress:  
The Not-So-Glamorous Life  
of a Harvey Girl  
By Carolyn Meyer

978-1-62091-652-0

Ages 10 and up

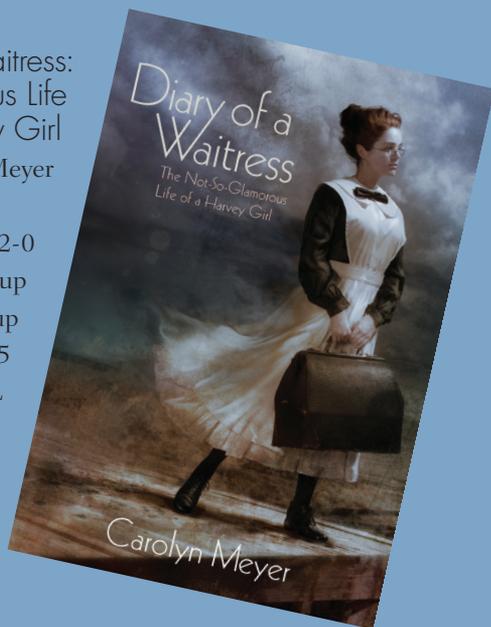
Grades 5 and up

\$17.95

Lexile: 940L

e-book: 978-1-62979-059-6

\$7.99



To order: Contact your Perseus Books Group sales representative, fax purchase orders to (800) 351-5073, or email [orderentry@perseusbooks.com](mailto:orderentry@perseusbooks.com). Customer Service can be reached at (800) 343-4499.

For marketing inquiries, contact [marketing@calkinscreekbooks.com](mailto:marketing@calkinscreekbooks.com).

For the complete Common Core State Standards, visit [corestandards.org/ELA-literacy](http://corestandards.org/ELA-literacy).

*This guide was prepared by Marie Jaskulka.*

[boydsmillspress.com](http://boydsmillspress.com) • [readcarolyn.com](http://readcarolyn.com)

 BOYDS MILLS PRESS

 CALKINS CREEK

