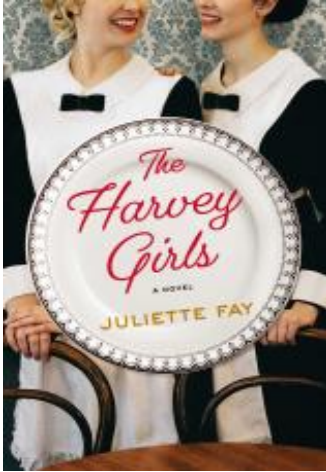


The Harvey Girls

by Juliette Fay



About the Book

Juliette Fay --- known for her "well-drawn characters and vibrant historical backdrops" (*Library Journal*) --- transports us to 1920s America with this big-hearted tale of two very different women who must learn to trust each other as one tries to save her family and the other to save herself. Perfect for fans of Kristin Hannah and Kristina McMorris.

1926: Charlotte Crowninshield was born into one of the finest Boston society families. Now she's on the run from a brutal husband, desperate to disappear into the wilds of the Southwest. Billie MacTavish is the oldest of nine children born to Scottish immigrants in Nebraska. She quit school in the sixth grade to help with her mother's washing and mending business, but even that isn't enough to keep the family afloat.

Desperate, both women join the ranks of the Harvey Girls, waitresses who serve in America's first hospitality chain on the Santa Fe railroad. Hired on the same day, they share three things: a room, a heartfelt dislike of each other--and each has a secret that certainly will get them fired.

Through 12-hour days of training in Topeka, Kansas, they learn the fine art of service, perfecting their skills despite bouts of homesickness, fear of being discovered and a run-in with the KKK. When they're sent to work at the luxurious El Tovar hotel at the Grand Canyon, the challenges only grow, as Billie struggles to hide her young age from would-be suitors and Charlotte discovers the little-known dark side of the national park's history.

"Juliette Fay's gift for creating complex, exquisitely human characters" (Marisa de los Santos, *New York Times* bestselling author) is on full display in this deeply moving and joyous celebration of female empowerment, loyalty and friendship.

Discussion Guide

1. Charlotte and Billie come from very different circumstances, and early on they heartily dislike each other. But they also begrudgingly find things to admire in the other person. What are those traits, and how are they revealed?
2. In the beginning of the story, Charlotte is aloof and unfriendly. Why is she so disinterested in connecting with others, and how is she drawn into friendships despite herself?
3. Billie and Charlotte accuse each other of being bossy throughout the story, and Leif points out Billie's bossiness, as well. Where does that instinct to tell others what to do come from in each of them? How does bossiness serve them? Would they be considered too assertive in today's world?
4. In the letter Billie writes to Leif, she tells him she loves him. Do you think she really loves him? What does she find so compelling about him? How do her feelings change by the end of the story?
5. When Charlotte reveals to Billie that her husband abused her, she expects to be shunned. Why was domestic violence considered so shameful for women? Is there still an element of shame today?
6. Sons and daughters who leave their families for work or college often have a little trouble reintegrating when they go home for a visit, as Billie did. Did you see your family differently after moving away and then returning?
7. Were you surprised to learn about the treatment of Native American tribes in the creation of the Grand Canyon?
8. Ruth, the clerk at the Hopi House, tells Charlotte, "It's what all conquerors do. They take the land and make you speak their language, and use their customs, and worship their god. Then you don't exist anymore, so you are no longer a problem." Can you name other cultures where that occurred? Do you have any ancestors who, for whatever reason, had to leave their homeland?
9. Was Billie unfair to Robert by not being honest with him about her age, or is all fair in love and war?
10. Did Simeon deserve to die the way he did?
11. When Charlotte and Billie get together for Billie's birthday 70 years later, their lives after the Grand Canyon are revealed. What was it about being Harvey Girls that made them "ready for anything"?
12. Would you have wanted to be a Harvey Girl?

Author Bio

Juliette Fay is the bestselling author of eight novels, including CITY OF FLICKERING LIGHT and the *USA Today* bestseller THE TUMBLING TURNER SISTERS. A graduate of Boston College and Harvard University, she lives in Massachusetts.

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