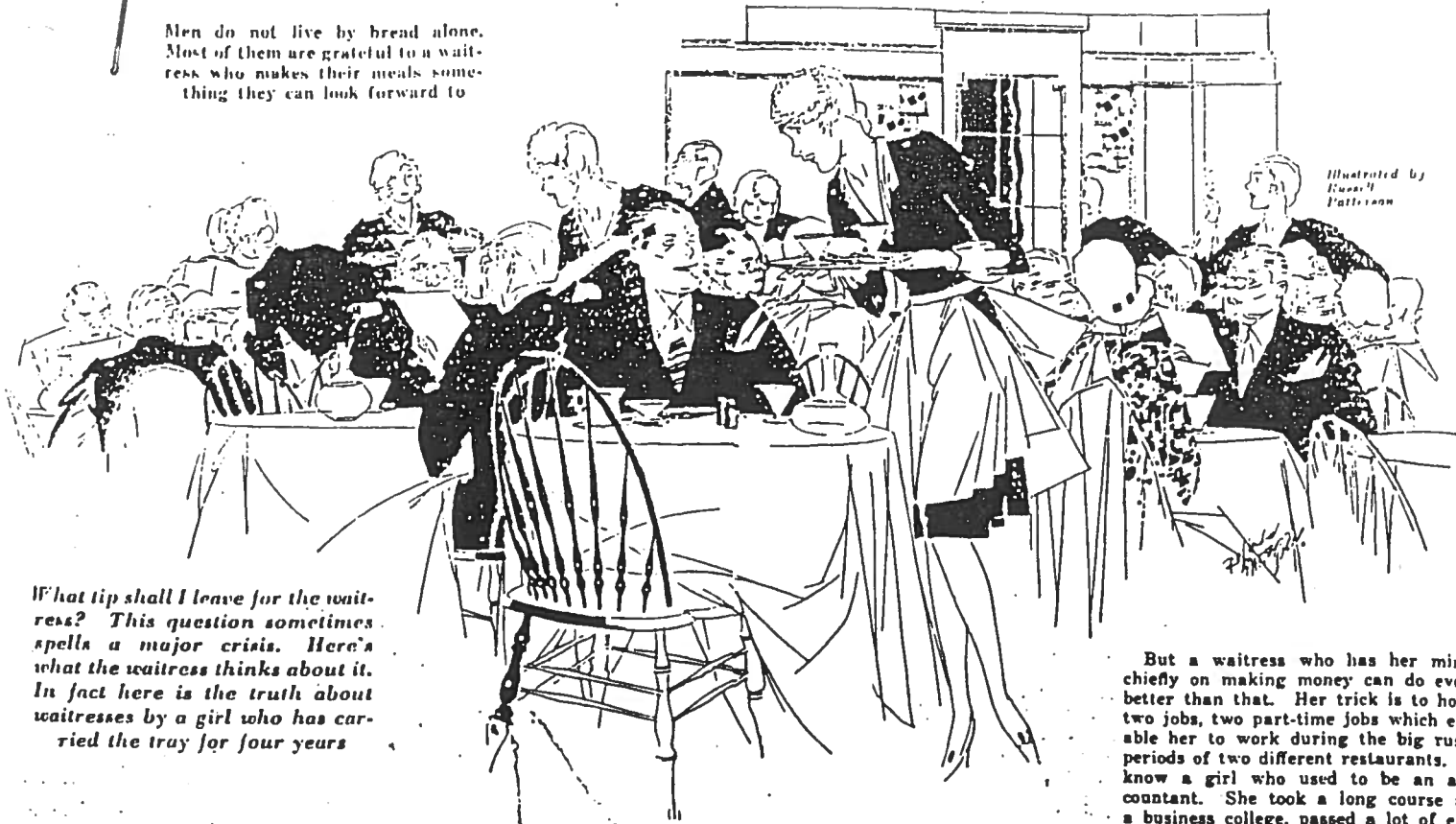


Men do not live by bread alone. Most of them are grateful to a waitress who makes their meals something they can look forward to



Illustrated by
Russell
Patterson

What tip shall I leave for the waitress? This question sometimes spells a major crisis. Here's what the waitress thinks about it. In fact here is the truth about waitresses by a girl who has carried the tray for four years

Don't Kid the Waitress

By Dagny Hansen

THE other day, in the restaurant where I work, I happened to catch a customer's eye just as he was sliding a coin under his plate. He looked guiltily away, started to go, and then motioned me over to him. He held up the coin. It was a quarter.

"Is that right?" he asked. "I mean is that what I ought to be leaving you?"

"Why," I said, "that's entirely up to you. It's more than most of the customers leave, if that's what you mean."

"I'm not talking about most of the customers," he said. "I'm talking about myself. What I want to know is, is that a fair tip? Considering your time and everything, does that pay you?"

"Oh, yes," I said. "If everybody gave us that much, we should be very well satisfied."

"That's what I was trying to find out," he said. Then, apparently relieved that the ice had been broken, he asked me a great many questions about my work, and seemed greatly interested in it. "Do you know," he said when he was putting on his coat, "this is the first time I ever got up my nerve to ask a girl about tips and things like that. I never knew what to tip. In a hotel, yes. Ten per cent. But in a place like this, where they have girls, I never had any idea. Well—thanks." He smiled and left.

I think this illustrates the uncertainty that many people have about what they should do in a restaurant, and also the very natural curiosity they have about the people who serve their food.

So perhaps you would like to know something about my work.

I work as a waitress for a large chain restaurant system in New York. And I shall begin with the question of pay. The average tip in restaurants of this kind is ten cents. There is considerable variation: if most of the customers are men, it may run higher; if, however, most of them are women, it is almost certain to run lower since women are not as generous with tips as men are, frequently leaving as little as a nickel.

Another Important Item

Taking one restaurant with another, however, ten cents is about the average. And at this rate, my own income is about \$25 a week, as follows:

Wages, at 30 cents an hour	.... \$ 6
Tips	..... 19
Total	..... \$25

But to this there should be added one very important item, which is meals. We get our meals free. This, at the very least, is worth \$5 a week to the part-time waitress and \$10 a week to the full-time. But in comfort it is worth a great deal more. To me, the tragedy of the girl in a big city who makes a limited amount of money is that when she is through with her day's work she cannot afford to go out and order a pleasant, well-cooked meal to round off her day. She must come home to a small apartment, and on her way stop at a grocery or delicatessen to buy

food; then she must cook it over a two-burner stove in a tiny kitchenette; then she must sit down alone and eat it. The waitress, however, doesn't do this. When her work is done she sits down with the other girls at a table, eats a good meal, changes from her uniform to street clothes, and the rest of the evening is hers to do what she pleases with.

My own personal income, then, foots up as follows:

Wages	..... \$ 6
Tips	..... 19
Meals (in kind)	..... 5
Total	..... \$30

But I earn less than many waitresses, because my home life is such that I prefer to work only a short time each day—from twelve to three. If I chose to do a full day's work I could make a great deal more.

Practically every restaurant has one big rush period which lasts from two to three hours, and other smaller ones which are shorter and less busy.

You can easily see that any restaurant needs more waitresses in the big rush period than it needs the rest of the time. So practically all restaurants have two classes of waitresses, part-time and full-time. The part-time waitresses work about three hours, sometimes a little more, sometimes a little less, during the big rush period. The full-time waitresses work about eight hours. They are on the floor during the big rush period and one of the smaller ones.

Waitress vs. Accountant

The earnings of a full-time waitress are naturally much higher than the earnings of a part-time waitress. By the week, many girls run about as follows:

Wages, at 30 cents an hour	.... \$15
Tips	..... 30
Meals (in kind)	..... 10
Total	..... \$55

But a waitress who has her mind chiefly on making money can do even better than that. Her trick is to hold two jobs, two part-time jobs which enable her to work during the big rush periods of two different restaurants. I know a girl who used to be an accountant. She took a long course at a business college, passed a lot of examinations, got a diploma, and then sat back to watch the money roll in. It didn't roll. People didn't seem to pay much for an accountant for some reason. She tried a ~~good~~ different jobs, and the highest she was paid at any of them was \$22 a week. Presently she got married, and when her husband fell ill and was unable to work, she had to find a job in a hurry.

Two-Timing

She went out and got herself a position as a waitress in one of the tea rooms on Eighth Street, in the Greenwich Village section of New York. Here she was paid \$6 a week by the lady who ran the tea room—which is about average, by the way, where wages are not computed by the hour—and took in about \$25 in tips. She worked from five-thirty until nine, when the tea room closed. But after a while it occurred to her that three and a half hours are not much to call a day's work, so she went uptown and got herself a job in a small hotel that makes a specialty of serving after-theater crowds, working from ten until twelve-thirty. Here she was paid another \$6 by the management, and took in between \$20 and \$25 in tips. Her income, then, adds up as follows:

Wages	..... \$12
Tips (about)	..... 43
Meals (in kind)	..... 10
Total	..... \$65

These figures, I caution you, are not to be regarded in any sense as average, and I hope I will not give you the idea that from now on you can tip your waitress a little less than you have been tipping her.

Let us say that my figures represent what a girl who knows her business can reasonably expect.

When I say a waitress who "knows her business," just what do I mean by it? I am afraid I shall have to stop a few moments and think. Many qualities combine to make a good waitress. Experience is necessary. A good home background is (Continued on page 67)