

Lucy's first job

When I was just 16, my father bought an old guesthouse in the village where we lived and decided to turn it into a luxury hotel. At the early stages of the hotel, he experimented with everything. None of us had ever worked in a hotel before, but my dad had a vision of what guests would like to see. His standards were uncompromisingly high and he believed that in order to achieve those standards the most important thing was work.

For a month that summer, my name was down on the duty roster as waitress at breakfast and dinner, which included laying the tables in the dining room beforehand and hoovering and glass polishing afterwards. This gave me the middle of the day free for studying because, predictably, my school report had not lived up to my father's high expectations.

Like all the other waitresses, I was equipped with a neat little uniform and instructions to treat the guests as though they were special visitors in my own home. Although I did not feel comfortable with this, I did not express my feelings. Instead I concentrated all my attention on doing the job as well as, if not better than, the older girls.

I soon learned how to tackle the two most daunting installations in the kitchen: the dishwasher and the chef, Gordon. He had an impressive chef's hat and a terrifying ability to lose his temper and get violent for no clear reason. His breath was strong and fishy, and I avoided close contact with him and always grabbed the dishes he set down with a forbidding expression on my face which was transformed into a charming smile in the brief space between kitchen and dining room.

Breakfast waitressing was, I found, more enjoyable than the dinner shift. The guests came wandering into the dining room from seven thirty onwards, staring with appreciation at the view of sea and islands through the dining-room window. If the day

looked promising, I would note down requests for boats and packed lunches along with their breakfast orders. It was a matter of pride to me that everyone got their order promptly, and I took pleasure in my ability to get on with the people at each table.

It was funny how differently people behaved in the evenings, dressed up and talking with louder, colder voices, not always returning my smile. However, that all changed when Dad, who was keen to make full use of my potential, created a special role for me which made me feel considerably more important.

It began with a few modest trays of cakes for the guests' packed lunches and progressed swiftly to fancy cakes for afternoon teas. I found that recipes were easy to follow and it was amusing to improvise. This led to the climax: a nightly extravaganza known as Lucy's Sweet Trolley. Every evening, I made a grand entrance, wheeling before me a trolley carrying the most extraordinary collection of puddings, cakes and other desserts ever to grace a Scottish hotel. Most were things I had invented myself and I had cooked all of them. Some - Jacobite Grenades, Mocha Genghis Khan and Goat's Milk Bavarios to name a few - were undeniably strange. It was Dad's idea that I should dress smartly and stop at each table and recite the name of each dish.

Adapted from *Runaway* by Lucy Irvine



For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text. Use the words you underlined in Exercise 3 to help you.

1 What did the people working at the hotel have in common?

- A They all understood the guests' expectations.
- B They all shared the same goals.
- C They all lacked experience.
- D They were all hard-working.

2 What does the writer mean by *daunting* in line 24?

- A disgusting
- B frightening
- C interesting
- D strange

3 What did Lucy do while she carried food to the dining room?

- A She smiled at Gordon in a friendly way.
- B She avoided touching Gordon.
- C She checked the food Gordon gave her.
- D She started to look more friendly.

4 Lucy enjoyed serving breakfasts more than dinners because the guests were

- A more demanding.
- B more friendly.
- C more punctual.
- D more relaxed.

5 What was special about the food on Lucy's Sweet Trolley?

- A It was inspired by traditional recipes.
- B It was prepared along with food for picnics.
- C It was made following her father's instructions.
- D It contained a number of new creations.

6 What impression does Lucy give of her job throughout the passage?

- A She found many opportunities to laugh.
- B She looked for ways of doing it better.
- C She found all aspects of it enjoyable.
- D She could do it with little effort.