

1. Прочитайте текст и подготовьтесь к пересказу и беседе по его содержанию, ответьте на вопросы по тексту.

A START IN LIFE

By Ruth Suckow

The Switzers were hurrying to get Daisy ready by the time that Elmer Kruse should get through in town. Mrs. Switzer was trying at the last moment to get all of Daisy's things into the old suitcase that lay on the bed.

“Mama, I can't find the belt to that red dress.”

“Oh, isn't it somewhere around? If I come across I can send it out to you.... Daisy, you get yourself ready now.”

“I am ready, mama I want to put on my other coat.”

“Oh, it's somewhere in the suitcase. You needn't be so anxious to fix yourself up¹. This isn't like going visiting.”

Daisy stood at the little mirror preening herself – such a homely² child. But she had never really learned yet how homely she was. She was the oldest, and she got the best clothes that were given to the Switzers. Goldie and Dwight, her sisters, envied her. She was important in her small world.

Mrs. Switzer looked at her, troubled, but not knowing how she could tell her all the things she ought to be told. Daisy had never been away before except to her Uncle Fred's at Lehigh³. She seemed to think that that would be the same. She had so many things to learn. Working for other people – she would learn what that meant.

Daisy was so proud. She thought it was quite a thing to be “starting in⁴ to earn.” She thought she could buy herself so much with her dollar and a half a week.

They heard a car come splashing through the mud on the lawn.

“Well, I guess you'll have to go now. He won't want to wait,” said Mrs. Switzer ... Daisy held on as the car skidded going down the short clay hill. They turned onto the main road. She felt her suitcase on the floor of the car, the box of

¹ to fix up – (зд) прихорашиваться = to preen

² homely – некрасивая невзрачная

³ Lehigh ['li:hai]

⁴ start in = begin

groceries beside her. She eyed these with a sharp curiosity. There was a fresh pineapple – something the Switzers didn't often get at home. She wondered if Edna (Mrs.Kruse) would have it for dinner. Maybe she could hint a little to Edna.

“Here we are!”

“Oh, is this where you live?” Daisy cried eagerly.

Edna came out on the step. Elmer smiled at her as he took out the box of groceries. She said kindly enough: “Well, you brought Daisy. Hallo, Daisy, are you going to stay with us this summer?”

“I guess so,” Daisy said importantly. But she suddenly felt a little shy and lonely as she got out of the car and stood on the bare ground in the chilly wind.

“Look in the door,” Edna said in a low fond voice, motioning her head.

Two little round heads were pressed tightly against the screen door. There was a clamor of “Daddy, Daddy!”. Elmer and Edna were going into the kitchen together, until Edna remembered and called back in a hurry: “Oh, come in, Daisy!”

Daisy stood, a little left out and lonely, there in the kitchen, as Billy, the older of the babies, climbed frantically over Elmer, demanding candy, and, the little one toddled⁵ smilingly around. Edna was laughing and scolding at Elmer and the baby.

“Daisy, we'll have to hurry. You must help me get the dinner ready. You can cut bread and get things on the table. You must help, you know. That's what you are supposed to do,” – said Edna.

Daisy looked startled, a little scared and upset. “Well, I don't know where you keep your bread.”

“Right over in the cabinet, in that big box. You must watch, Daisy, and learn where things are.”

After dinner Edna said, “We are going for a little ride, Daisy. Now you can wash the dishes. We won't be gone so very long. When it's quarter past five, you start the fire, and slice the potatoes that were left, and the meat. And set the table.”

Daisy stood looking after them. The older boy asked to sit beside his daddy. Edna took him from Elmer and put beside her on the back seat.

⁵ toddle – ковылять, учиться ходить (о ребенке)

Daisy sensed something different in the atmosphere than she had ever known before – some difference between the position of herself and the babies, and she started to understand what mama had meant when she had said that this would not be visiting. She didn't want to stay here. But mama had told her that she must begin helping this summer. She started crying, but without tears; because she already had the cold knowledge that no one would notice it and come to comfort her.

TEXT № 1

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QUESTIONS

1. What was Daisy's position at home?
2. How did she feel about leaving home for the Kruses' place?
3. Why was Mrs. Switzer troubled?
4. Why did Daisy start crying?