

From *American Crime Stories* by John Escott

The girl was so sure she would get the job that she had come to Westchester with her suitcase. She sat in the living room of the Christiansens' house, looking, in her plain blue coat and hat, even younger than her twenty-one years. 'Have you worked as a governess before?' Mr Christiansen asked. He sat beside his wife on the sofa. 'Any references, I mean?' 'I was a maid at Mr Dwight Howell's home in New York for the last seven months.' Lucille looked at him with suddenly wide gray eyes. 'I could get a reference from there if you like . . . But when I saw your advertisement this morning, I didn't want to wait. I've always wanted a place where there are children.' Mrs Christiansen smiled at the girl's enthusiasm, and said, 'We might phone them, of course... What do you say, Ronald? You wanted someone who really liked children . . .' And fifteen minutes later Lucille Smith was standing in her room in the servants' house, at the back of the big house, putting on her new white uniform. 'You're starting again, Lucille,' she told herself in the mirror. 'You're going to forget everything that happened before.' But her eyes grew too wide again, as though to deny her words. They looked like her mother's when they opened like that, and her mother was part of what she must forget. (Escott, 2000, 21)

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1. Why did the girl bring her suitcase to Westchester?
  - a) To demonstrate her preparedness for the job
  - b) To impress the Christiansens with her belongings
  - c) To store her clothes during the interview
  - d) To signal her intention to stay permanently
  
2. Where did the girl work before applying for the job as a governess?
  - a) The Christiansens' house in Westchester
  - b) Mr Dwight Howell's home in New York
  - c) A different house in Westchester
  - d) She was unemployed prior to this job
  
3. Why did Lucille want to work at the Christiansens' house?
  - a) She wanted to get away from her previous job
  - b) She wanted to live in Westchester
  - c) She had always wanted to work with children
  - d) She saw their advertisement and didn't want to wait

4. How did Mrs Christiansen respond to Lucille's enthusiasm?

- a) She was skeptical and hesitant
- b) She offered her a reference from their previous maid
- c) She smiled and considered phoning Lucille's previous employer
- d) She asked her husband for his opinion

5. What does Lucille tell herself in the mirror before starting her new job?

- a) She's going to forget everything that happened before
- b) She needs to remember her mother's advice
- c) She must be cautious and reserved
- d) She should be prepared for any situation

Answers:

- 1. To demonstrate her preparedness for the job
- 2. Mr Dwight Howell's home in New York
- 3. She had always wanted to work with children
- 4. She smiled and considered phoning Lucille's previous employer
- 5. She's going to forget everything that happened before