



4. BREAKFAST

By (John Stienbeck)

SUBSTANCE OF THE STORY

The story is a faithful account of the writer's visit to a family of cotton-pickers. He came upon this family as he was walking along a lonely road one morning. He saw a tent by the roadside. A woman carrying a baby was cooking breakfast for the family. Two men, one young and the other old, came out of the tent. They welcomed the writer and invited him to breakfast. They looked very happy and contented with their lot. They said they were happy because they had got a cotton-picking job. They had been working in the cotton fields for the past twelve days. As they sat down to breakfast they told the writer how happy they were with their honest labor.

They offered the writer a job in the cotton fields. He was deeply impressed by the simple, honest living and hospitality of cotton-pickers.

The sudden meeting with the simple, honest family of cotton pickers became an everlasting sweet memory for the writer. It was a surprise for him because he did not know that such sincere and hospitable people existed in this society. The nice behavior and devout faith of these poor uneducated people impressed him. They greeted the writer and invited him to breakfast. They told him how happy they were because they had a job to do and enough to eat. They offered the writer a job in the cotton fields. Before breakfast they thanked God for His blessings and prayed to him for further blessings. The story leaves a pleasant impression on the reader's mind.

Q: What does the story teach us?

The breakfast, which the writer shared with the cotton pickers, was simple and delicious. It was delicious because it was the fruit of honest labour. The woman was a very good cook. The breakfast consisted of roasted meat, biscuits and coffee. Everything was very well cooked and enough for all.

The young man said,

“We been eating good for twelve days.”

The simple statement shows how thankful these people are for the blessings God has bestowed on them. It reflects the poor man’s faith in providence.

This faith of the poor man is the element of great beauty, which the writer speaks of. He is impressed by the cheerful, contented life of the poor cotton-pickers. The breakfast with the cotton-pickers becomes a cherished memory for him. There is a lesson in the story for those who are not satisfied with their lot. It teaches them to be thankful for what they have instead of grumbling against the will of God. The simple, honest cotton-pickers are very hospitable. They love to share their things with others. They cordially welcome guests.

Q: The story gives us a glimpse of the free, happy and peaceful life of cotton-pickers. Do you agree?

Yes, the story gives us a glimpse of the free, happy and peaceful life of cotton-pickers. These poor people live on occasional day-labor. They have no permanent source of income. Cotton-picking is occasional employment. Yet the cotton-pickers can manage to live within their means. They live a simple life. They do not need much. Their wants are few and cheap. So they do not have to run after money.

The story also shows that the cotton-pickers are deeply religious people. They never grumble over their hard lot. They thank God for what they get. They are very generous and hospitable. They love to share their things with others. They are free from the vices of the rich. They are not selfish, greedy and dishonest. The story shows that they enjoy true happiness and satisfaction.

These simple but generous people live an ideal life of peace and contentment. They have no worries. They do not yearn for wealth and comfort. They love to work for a simple honest living. They have no ambitious plans for future. They are thankful for what they have at present. They love to share their blessings with others. They not only invite the writer to breakfast, but also offer to help him with a job in the cotton fields.

From what we read in the story we can safely conclude that these are the people who enjoy true happiness and satisfaction in this world of woes and worries.

