

I Can Sleep Through A Storm

This story is all over the internet, in slightly different anonymous forms. If anyone knows an original source, please let us know BOLT@brown.edu. It came to us via a NOLS course; John Gookin <curriculum@nols.edu> is also hoping to credit the author.

Sam Cooke looked up from under the tractor he was fixing to see a middle-aged, well-build man standing there quietly waiting for him. To Sam's inquiry the man gave his name as Bill Jeffers – his business, handyman. He was inquiring about the “Handy Man Wanted” sign on Sam's gate.

Sam needed a helper, but he wanted to be sure he got a good one, so he asked the stranger, “What can you do?”

The reply, “I can sleep through a storm,” didn't make sense and sounded as though the man might be a little on the “cracked” side. Repeated questions brought on the same answer, calm and direct, “I can sleep through a storm.”

Impatiently Sam Cooke expressed his misgivings about hiring Jeffers by telling him that there was another man applying for the job, and to come back next Saturday to see if it was still open.

Saturday morning Jeffers was on hand early, inquiring about the job which he knew wasn't filled because the sign was still up on the gate. The interview was the same as before; with “I can sleep through a storm” Jeffers' only answer. By this time, Sam was desperate for a helper, so he hired the man on a trial basis.

In the weeks that followed, Sam was to find that Bill Jeffers was the best worker he had ever seen. Whatever needed doing got done, and well, and both men were pleased with the arrangement. The farmer was willing to forget that his hired man talked a little “peculiar” when asked what he could do.

Then one night came the storm. Lightning had been flickering on the horizon when they went to bed, but when Sam awoke about midnight; the storm was almost on them. He quickly pulled on his clothes and went to the hired mans room to wake him up so that together they could put the farm in shape for the storm, see that the doors were closed, the tractor covered, the livestock inside, and a number of other things.

Pound as he might on Bill's door, there was no response, and Sam angrily went rushing out to put the place in shape, muttering about his stupidity in hiring a man you couldn't waken when you needed him most, resolving to fire him in the morning.

When Sam got to the barn, all the doors were already closed, the tractor was indoors, the livestock was all bedded down; everything was all set. As he slowly undressed after his unnecessary trip around the farm in the rain, Sam Cooke at last knew what his hired man had meant by “I can sleep through a storm.” Jeffers did his works so well, so thoroughly that he did not need to worry in the time of storm. He knew that everything was right.

If we live our lives the same way, the storm times will never bother us, because we will be ready for them.