

“Family Supper” by Kazuo Ishiguro Essay

The family is the most important and turbulent relationship in human existence. Humans love their families regardless of their antics or the way that behave because of genetic similarities, society and cultural traditions. Sometimes it is not the case because outside society and personality affect the way a person views the world.

One of the best examples that should be discussed is a story “Family Supper” by Kazuo Ishiguro, in which household does not cooperate and has various issues. There is a certain moment in the life of a family when each member understands that it is necessary to come together, and numerous factors could lead to questionable actions. A father makes a desperate decision to take his own life, and life of his children without telling them anything.

There could be several ways to interpretations of this story, but some points help to identify the real meaning. It starts with an unexpected death of main character’s mother. She has died from poisoning while eating fugu fish. It needs to be said that the preparation of such dishes requires immense skill because an even slight mistake could be lethal, and food becomes extremely poisonous. It is also noted that it is not easy to see if there was any error, and the only possible way to find out is to taste the fish.

The father cannot accept his wife’s unexpected death and cannot fathom the fact that his children want to leave their home. One of the major factors that make him extremely depressed is that his company is about to collapse. It is paramount to note that most people cannot control their emotions and actions in this state. The business that he organized with his partner was active for more than seventeen years. The sister tells the brother that father’s colleague killed his whole family because he could not take such disgrace.

It is essential that this story is mentioned few times. The father recognized the dignity and devotion to the company of that man. He was influenced by his partner in many aspects because he respected his principles. Also, he wanted to know the opinions of his daughter and son on this situation because he viewed it as a possible solution to the problems. It should be said that the attitude of the children does not satisfy the father. The son was living on the territory of the United States, and daughter was also considering possible migration.

This seems like an excellent beginning for the children, but the father cannot comprehend the fact that they do not respect traditions of the family. It can be seen that he has some doubts at this point. It is evident that he wanted his children to stay in this country and make sure that Japanese traditions are kept, but they have their way of doing things.

The son traveled to the United States where he met a woman that was not Japanese, but he has to come back to his parent’s house because he does not know what to do with his life after his relationship has ended. The father lectures his son, and he believes that it was done under an influence of outside culture (Ishiguro 1). He thinks that the daughter is not like the son, but it is a mistake. It needs to be said that the sister decides to speak freely when not in the presence of the father.

She actually has a boyfriend who wants to move to America pretty soon (Ishiguro 2). Her behavior changes dramatically once her father returns because she does not want him to know about her future plans. It can be seen that both children are moving away from their culture slowly but steadily to chase their dreams.

This is a huge disappointment for their father and is not an easy idea for him to accept. Finally, the father takes the responsibility for his children’s actions on himself because he believed that it was only his fault. After that, they start to discuss son’s relationship with the mother, and how she was often disappointed in his actions. Father felt that he was not able to raise the children properly, and he thinks that it is extremely shameful.

The strain on the relationships that appears is immense, and cannot be easily resolved. He thought that he should have been stricter, and he believed that it could have cause led to his wife’s death. The story ends with a peaceful supper and a serious dialogue. The best way to interpret this story is that the father has made a decision to repeat his partner’s actions.

He realized that he could no longer manage the situation and decided to commit a form of suicide, and his children did not know anything about it. It can be seen that a samurai blood runs in his veins because he wanted to make sure that his family’s dignity is protected. Furthermore, it is symbolic that he serves fugu fish because his wife also died in the same way. This supper will be the family’s last.

The reasoning behind such actions should be discussed. It needs to be noted that death is interwoven with the Japanese tradition. The first possible justification is that the family's firm was on the verge of bankruptcy, and it is a great shame. The father most likely made this decision because he was profoundly influenced by his business partner. The second possible reason is that he thought that it is too late to address the behavior of his children, and there is no other way to fix the situation that has occurred.

He knew that his son did not respect the traditions as much as he should, but it is also likely that he also suspected his daughter because he was a wise man. The last reason that should be stated is that the father has missed his wife, and he believed that it is a perfect opportunity to make sure that the family is reunited.

However, it is entirely possible that the father did not poison his children and himself because it is not strictly described. He also could think that his daughter does not deserve such destiny. Nevertheless, he most likely proceeded with his intentions because clues are listed throughout the whole story.

For example, the father has asked the children if they are hungry so many times that it was extremely suspicious. It is also interesting that he looked at his hands because he had some doubts about what he did. It is likely that son and daughter realized that the father had a plan but wanted to taste the meal because they understood that they let their parents down.

In conclusion, values of any culture are adamant. Most may view the father's actions as highly questionable, and it is a hard topic to discuss from an ethical perspective.

However, one needs to understand that some cultures are different, and it may not be an easy task to comprehend some of the traditions, but they should be respected. The father has made this decision because he honestly believed that it is the only choice that he had because he actually loved his family, traditions, and work. He could not see how he may live like this, and committed suicide.

Works Cited

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *A Family Supper*. Web.