

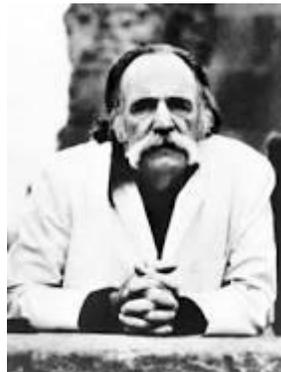
Mahesh Public School, Jodhpur

Class : XI

Subject: English Core

TEXT : SNAPSHOTS
Chapter -1 (Page 1-9)
The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse

William Saroyan



William Saroyan (/səˈroɪən/; August 31, 1908 – May 18, 1981) was an Armenian-American novelist, playwright, and short story writer. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1940, and in 1943 won the Academy Award for Best Story for the film adaptation of his novel *The Human Comedy*.

Born: August 31, 1908, Fresno

Children: Aram Khachaturian, Lucy Saroyan

Profession: Novelist, Playwright, Writer

Works written: The Time of Your Life, My Name ...

Awards: Academy Award for Best Story, Pulitzer Prize for Drama, New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best American Play

"***The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse***" is a short story by William Saroyan, published within the collection *My Name is Aram*. It tells the story of two boys, Aram and Mourad, who belong to a very poor Armenian tribe.

Characters :

- 1.Aram – a nine year old Armenian boy belonging to Garoghlanian tribe.**
- 2.Mourad – a thirteen year Armenian boy belonging to Garoghlanian tribe, cousin of Aram.**
- 3.Uncle Khosrove – Aram’s uncle , a crazy person with a powerful head.**
- 4. John Byro – a farmer and owner of a white horse.**
- 5.Narrator’s mother.**

Plot summary

"The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse" is narrated by a nine-year-old Armenian boy named Aram, a member of the Garoghlanian tribe, living among the lush fruit orchards and vineyards of the San Joaquin valley in California. One morning Aram is awakened at four in morning by his thirteen-year-old cousin Mourad, who is thought to be demented by everyone except Aram, and has a way with animals. Aram is astonished to see that Mourad is sitting on a beautiful white horse. Aram had always wanted to ride a white horse, but his family is too poor to afford one. However, in spite of being poor, the Garoghlanian tribe is noted for its honesty and trust, as a result, it is unthinkable that Mourad would have stolen the horse. Aram felt that his cousin couldn't have stolen the horse.

Mourad's crazy behavior was considered to be of natural descent from their uncle Khosrove, even though his father, Zorab, was a practical man. Uncle Khosrove was an enormous man who was always furious, impatient, and irritable. He would roar for everyone to stop talking and say *It is no harm, pay no attention to it*. In fact, one day, when his son came and told them that their house was on fire, Khosrov silenced him by roaring "Enough. It is no harm".

Aram was invited to ride on the horse with Mourad. The idea of Mourad stealing the horse drained away from Aram's mind as when he felt that it wouldn't become stealing unless they offer to sell the horse. They enjoyed rides on the horse for a few hours.

After a short time of riding, Mourad wanted to ride alone on the horse. Aram had the same longing, but when he sat on the horse and kicked its muscles it reared and snorted and raced forward, eventually dropping Aram off its back. After half an hour they found the horse and hid it in the barn of a deserted vineyard of a farmer named Fetvajian which had once been his pride.

That afternoon, an Assyrian farmer named John Byro—an Assyrian friend of the Garoghlanians—came to Aram's house. He reported to Aram's mother that his white horse which had been stolen a month ago was still missing. Hearing this, Aram concludes that, Mourad must have had the horse for a long time. Khosrove, who was at Aram's house when Byro came, shouted -"it's no harm" to such an extent that Byro was forced to leave to avoid responding.

Aram ran to Mourad to inform him about Byro's arrival. Aram also pleads with Mourad not to return the horse until he could learn to ride. Mourad disagrees saying that Aram would take at least a year to learn, but promises he would keep it for six months at most. This became a routine. Mourad came daily to pick Aram to ride, and Aram continuously fell off the horse's back after every attempt. Two weeks later, when they were going to take the horse back to its hiding place, they met Byro on the road. The farmer was extremely surprised. He recognized his horse but refused to believe that the boys had stolen it. Later the boys return back the horse quietly. That afternoon Byro came to Aram's house to inform that the stolen horse has been returned. He thanks God because the horse has become better tempered and well behaved too.

Difficult words and their meanings:

1. Magnificence – extremely beautiful
2. Daybreak – dawn
3. Armenian – official language of Armenia branch
4. Longings – an aching desire
5. Comical – funny
6. Garoghlanian – an Armenian tribe
7. Consequently – as a result
8. Pious – religious
9. Leap out – jump out from a place
10. Vineyard – plantation of grapevines used in winemaking
11. Orchards – a piece of land of the plantation of fruits
12. Irrigation ditches – manmade channel used to deliver water to homes, industries and other uses
13. Trot – proceed with something
14. Descendant – a system that develops from an earlier simple version
15. Streak – race
16. Enormous - huge
17. San Joaquin Valley – one of the long interior valleys of California

- 18. Capricious – inconsistent change of mood
- 19. Vagrant – a person without a settled home or work
- 20. Vazire – a name
- 21. Fury – anger
- 22. Reared – raised
- 23. Snorted – breathed out
- 24. Dawned – appeared
- 25. Alfalfa – a flowering plant
- 26. Parlour – a sitting space in a house
- 27. City Dweller – a person who lives in a city
- 28. Surrey – a country in South-East England

Reading with Insight (page 8.)

1. You will probably agree that this story does not have breathless adventure and exciting action.

Then what in your opinion makes it interesting?

Ans: The story did not have exciting action and breathless adventures' yet it had suspense in the story which made it interesting for the readers. It was a good psychological narration and both the boys wanted to try something adventurous. As their family was poor and they both wanted to ride a horse. Mourad stole it and they both rode it for quite some time. After they were over their game play, they took it back to its original place and owner.

2. Did the boys return the horse because they were conscience-stricken or because they were afraid?

Ans: The boys returned the horse not because they were afraid but because of their conscience. Their family was known for its honesty yet they had stolen the horse months ago. When they met John Byro on his way to town, the horse was with them. He carefully examined it and shared that it looked exactly like the one he had just like a twin. It felt like it was his own horse but since he knew his parents, he didn't believe it was his horse they were carrying. This struck the boys and they decided to take the horse back to the farmer's vineyard to put it in the barn.

3. "One day back there in the good old days when I was nine and the world was full of every imaginable kind of magnificence, and life was still a delightful and mysterious dream..."The story begins in a mood of nostalgia.

Can you narrate some incident from your childhood that might make an interesting story?

Ans: By reading those lines, no one can stop themselves from travelling back to the memory lane. I remember when I was twelve years old. I used to visit my grandparent's home which was located at a hill station. I would spend my entire summer vacation with them. We would go to the market to eat delicious snacks, would go shopping and watch TV together. I remember once going to a summer camp for a month. They would drop me off to the place and would come to pick me up after the classes got over. Sometimes, my grandmother would bring a packed lunch for me. I would eat it as fast as we would go shopping after that. I always got sad whenever I had to go back to my home to go back to school.

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4. The story revolves around characters who belong to a tribe in Armenia. Mourad and Aram are members of the Garoghlanian family. Now locate Armenia and Assyria on the atlas and prepare a write-up on the Garoghlanian tribes. You may write about people, their names, traits, geographical and economic features as suggested in the story.

Ans: Garoghlanian tribe is said to be a work of fiction by author William Saroyan in his book of the year 1940 'My name is Aram'. They were Armenian. They were poor people who hardly managed to gather food to feed their stomach every day but they were known for honesty. Hospitality is one of the important aspects of the tribe. Most of the Armenian people followed Christianity. They have a huge variety of food at social gatherings. They focused on forgiveness of sins and on the spirit of tolerance.

Additional Questions:

Short Answer Questions:

Q.1. Why was it difficult for Aram to believe the sight of his cousin Mourad with the beautiful white horse?

Ans: When Aram looked through the window, he saw his cousin Mourad with a beautiful white horse and it was a sight which was very difficult for him to believe for two reasons: First, the whole of the Garoghlanian family to which the two boys belonged were extremely poor and therefore it was not possible for Mourad to buy that horse. Secondly, in that case, it would mean that Mourad had stolen that horse. But that was also not possible, because the Garoghlanian family was also very much famous for their honesty and therefore Mourad could not steal that horse either.

Q.2. Where had Mourad been hiding the horse?

Ans. Mourad had been hiding the horse in the barn of a deserted vineyard which was owned by a farmer named Fetvajian.

Q.3. What did the farmer John Byro tell the two boys when one day they accidentally met him with his horse in their custody?

Ans. The farmer examined the horse when one morning he found it with the two boys and he told them that he could swear that the horse was his very horse which had been stolen from him many weeks before if he did not know about their parents. He added that the fame of their family for honesty was very well known to him and therefore he liked to say that the horse could be the twin of his stolen horse.

Q.4. What did John Byro tell Aram's mother and Uncle Khosrove when he got his horse back?

Ans. After John Byro got his horse back mysteriously one day, he came to Aram's house and told Aram's mother and Uncle Khosrove that he did not know what to think about the whole matter. It was because the horse was stronger than ever and was better tempered too and therefore he thanked God.

Q.5. What were the two things for which the Garoghlonian family was famous?

Ans. The Garoghlonian family was famous for the following two things:

1. Their poverty
2. Their honesty

Q.6. What points were put forward by Aram in defense of Mourad's act of stealing the horse?

Ans. Aram argued to himself that stealing a horse for a ride was not the same thing as stealing something else, such as money. And then he went a little ahead by saying that if one was so much crazy about horses the way Mourad and he himself were, it was not stealing at all. It would not become stealing until they offered to sell the horse and he was sure that last thing they would never be doing.

Q.7. Which excuses were given by Aram to himself for taking a ride on the horse despite knowing fully the truth about the theft of the horse by Mourad?

Ans: Aram dismissed stealing a horse as much grave a crime as stealing money. Secondly, he believed that if it was something like a horse for which both he and his cousin were crazy then it couldn't be stealing. Additionally, it was not going to become stealing until they offered to sell the horse.

Q.8. Why was Aram unwilling to return the horse so soon?

Ans. Aram was crazy for horse and he wanted to learn horse riding at all costs. The horse would not let him to ride over it and hence he was unwilling to return the horse at least till he would learn to ride it.

Long Answer Questions

Q.1. Why did the two boys ultimately return the horse all of a sudden although they had planned to keep it at least for six months?

Ans. Although the two boys had planned to keep the horse for at least six months, they returned it all of a sudden the morning after they accidentally met the farmer John Byro from whom Mourad had stolen the horse. The farmer examined the horse and told them that he could swear that the horse was his very horse which had been stolen from him many weeks before if he did not know about their parents. He added that the fame of their family for honesty was very well known to him and therefore he liked to say that the horse could be the twin of his stolen horse. What John Byro told them served as an eye opener for the two boys especially Mourad and they became conscious how precious and strong their family's fame for honesty was and therefore they did not want to tarnish that name and prestige and immediately returned the horse.

Q.2. Mourad was the natural descendant of the crazy streak of uncle Khosrove. Explain the statement giving instances from the story, 'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse'.

Ans. Uncle Khosrove was considered in the Garoghlanian tribe as one of the craziest persons. It was also believed that the tribe that Mourad was the natural descendant of the crazy streak in their tribe. Uncle Khosrove's craziness was out of the world. He had the largest moustache in the

surrounding. His talk was not less than roaring, which was but natural for him. Once when his son came running to tell him about his house on fire, he simply said, 'It is no harm; pay no attention to it'. The barber who reminded him that it was his own house also got rebukes. Khosrove also asked John Byro not to worry about the horse or the loss of money or even for his paining legs and answered in the same way. Mourad was considered the natural descendant of this man though not a biological descendant mainly because of the crazy acts he was involved in. The act of stealing a horse because he was crazy about it is an example to prove the same. Like the punch line of uncle Khosrove i.e. 'It is no harm; pay no attention to it' Mourad used to say that he had a way with the things, animals and even people. Thus Mourad said that he had a way with the horse, with the dogs and with the farmers too.

Q.3. 'I knew my cousin Mourad enjoyed being alive more than anyone else who had ever fallen into the world by mistake.' Explain the statement with help of the instances from the story.

Ans.

Value Points:

- Mourad's nature
- His crazy deeds
- Having a way with the things
- Considerate towards animals
- A true member of the tribe

Q.4. Write a brief note on the Garoghlanian tribe.

Value Points:

- The traits of the tribe
- Economic condition
- The members of the tribe
- Its uniqueness

Questions for Practice

Long Questions:

1. Does the social atmosphere described in the story differ from your social atmosphere? How?
2. What are moral lessons that the story put forward?
3. Compare and contrast the character of Aram and Mourad.
4. What picture of rural life does the story paint?
5. Describe Aram's horse-riding lesson.

Short Questions:

1. How does Mourad has a 'way with the dogs'?
2. How does Mourad have a 'way with farmers'?
3. Even when Aram knew that Mourad was sitting on the back of the horse that morning, he could not believe his eyes?
4. Does Uncle Khroshrove resemble Mourad in any way?
5. Bring out the frustrations in the farmer John Byro after losing his horse.

#Happy Reading.....Enjoy the reading of the chapter .It will enrich your experience.....

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