

Ch. 1 - The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse

By – William Saroyan

"*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.

About the Author:

William Saroyan (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*.

Saroyan wrote extensively about the Armenian immigrant life in California. Many of his stories and plays are set in his native Fresno. Some of his best-known works are *The Time of Your Life*, *My Name Is Aram* and *My Heart's in the Highlands*.

He has been described in a Dickinson College news release as "one of the most prominent literary figures of the mid-20th century and by Stephen Fry as "one of the most underrated writers of the 20th century." Fry suggests that "he takes his place naturally alongside Hemingway, Steinbeck and Faulkner.

The Book:

My Name is Aram is a book of short stories by William Saroyan first published in 1940. The stories detail the exploits of Aram Garoghlanian, a boy of Armenian descent growing up in Fresno, California, and the various members of his large family. This book is assigned reading in some schools.

Armenians:

Armenians are an ethnic group native to the Armenian Highlands of Western Asia.

Armenians constitute the main population of Armenia and the *de facto* independent Artsakh. There is a wide-ranging diasporas of around 5 million people of full or partial Armenian ancestry living outside modern Armenia. The largest Armenian populations today exist in Russia, the United States, France, Georgia, Iran, Germany, Ukraine, Lebanon, Brazil and Syria. With the exceptions of Iran and the former Soviet states, the present-day Armenian diaspora was formed mainly as a result of the Armenian Genocide.

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 the 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 Khosrov, 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.

Summary – 2:

The summer of the beautiful white horse summary gives a brief account of the story using easy language. In this story, the author describes a childhood incident. He gets very nostalgic when talking about this incident. The incident is about his cousin Mourad and a beautiful white horse.

This is a story of two tribal Armenian boys who belonged to the Garoghlanian tribe. For their family, even in times of extreme poverty nothing could match the importance of honesty. They never did anything wrong and never lied or never even stole anything. The story talks about an incident that revolves around two cousins Aram who is nine years old and Mourad who is thirteen. The world, for Aram, at that time, seemed to be a delightful and extremely joyous yet mysterious dream. People believed in every imaginable kind of magnificence. Mourad was considered to be crazy by everybody he knew.

The story opens with Mourad coming to Aram's house at four in the morning one fine day. He tapped on the window to Aram's room. When Aram looked out of the window, he was taken aback and startled to see Mourad riding a beautiful white horse. In fact, he was so dazed that Mourad had to say "Yes, it's a horse. You are not dreaming." All this was too unbelievable because Aram knew that they were too poor to be able to afford to buy a horse. The only way Mourad could possess it could be by stealing. They were too honest to lie and yet too crazy to ride a horse.

Thus, they kept the horse for two weeks, enjoying its ride in cool air and singing to their heart's content on the country roads. They hid it from the rest of the world by keeping it in a barn of the deserted vineyard. Meanwhile, Aram came to know that the horse was stolen from John Byro. They planned not to return it to him so soon although it pricked their conscience to steal, which was completely their ethics and tribal norms.

One fine day they came across John, the farmer. Such was the boys' family famous for their honesty that the thought of his horse being stolen by the boys never crossed John's mind. He was just amazed at the resemblance and said: "I would swear it is my horse if I did not know your parents." This moving experience led the boys towards John's vineyard the very next morning. They left the horse in the barn after patting it affectionately. Later that Based on day, John seemed to be very pleased and shared the news of the return of his horse with Aram's

mother. The story teaches us the importance and necessity of honesty even in the face of greed and passion
