

Class 11 – Snapshots

Ch. 1 - The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse

The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse is written by **William Saroyan**. The story is about two Armenian boys – **Aram and Mourad** who belong to the **Garoghlanian family**.

Their tribe is known for their uprightness. They are poor and can hardly earn money for food. They both long for riding a horse. One day, Mourad had stolen a horse from a farmer a month back. One early morning, he brought it to show Aram and invited him to fulfill his desire of riding a horse.

They ride on the horse for many days. When Aram gets to know the fact that the horse is stolen, he gets shocked but sets up his mind. One day the owner of the horse, John Byro, visits his house to grizzle about his missing horse to Uncle Khosrove, but uncle Khosrove had a different temperament towards all things and he kept repeating “pay no attention to these things.

One day on their way back to hide the horse on the deserted vineyard, they meet the owner and feel guilty at the end. The next morning, they returned the horse to the owner’s barn. Even knowing about the fact John byro kept his mouth closed.

We are providing you a short but detailed synopsis of a beautiful white horse of class 11 book snapshot to be able to get an idea of the main theme.

About the Author

William Saroyan was born in Fresno in 1908. William Saroyan 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 *The Human Comedy*.

Characters in the chapter -

- **Aram**
- **Mourad**
- **John Byro**
- **Uncle Khosrov**
- **Aram’s Mother**

Character sketch of Aram Mourad and Uncle Khosrove

Aram and Mourad were two Armenian boys who belonged to the Garoghlanian tribe which was known for their uprightness. Mourad was 13 years whereas Aram was 12 years of age and both wished to ride a horse but due to poverty could not buy their own.

So Mourad stole a beautiful white horse from John Byron's barn. Mourad was a little bit crazy and adventurous whereas on the other hand, Aram was fun-loving and kind-hearted. Mourad easily domesticated the horse and on being asked he told Aram about helping a robin bird and a dog. Aram was honest and timid in nature unlike Mourad who was a little bold and handle odd situations easily that is why he could easily lie to John Byron.

Uncle Khosrove was considered to be a very impatient man and kept repeating his same dialogue everywhere "do not pay heed towards these". Surely, Mourad has got this craziness from Uncle Khosrove.

Summary -

Aram and Mourad belong to a poor Garoghlanian family who were known for their honesty since the late 11th century. One morning when Aram was fast asleep his cousin showed him a beautiful white horse and invited him for a ride.

Because they were poor they could not afford a horse. Aram was in a doubt that his cousin had stolen the horse. They both have a longing to ride a horse and they both knew they could not fulfill their desire as they cannot buy a horse. Mourad was considered the craziest figure in this family. He began to roar and sing and feel the soft breeze as soon as he sat back on the horse.

At last, Aram wants to ride all alone, and very cleverly Mourad said if the horse let him to ride he could take a chance. Aram came to know that he stole the horse a month ago and was riding and having fun all alone every morning.

Aram got down and kicked his heels while shouting, "Vazire run" the horse ran at a very fast speed. Mourad took him to an irrigation ditch and to his surprise after five minutes he was all wet. To their surprise the horse did not move the next time as suggested by Mourad he kicked into his muscles but the horse leaped over seven vines before Aram fell down. Both of them searched the horse in different directions. Every morning they continued like this for two weeks.

One day, John Byron came to Aram's house to talk to his uncle Khosrove who was a pique and a loud man who shouted at almost everything. Byron was a large man with a gentle heart and told him about his missing horse whom he bought at sixty dollars.

For one month, he couldn't find his horse and had to walk for 10 miles to come to their house. Khosrove roared at him and told him, '*it's no harm, pay no attention to it.*' Byro became irritated by his attitude and he went on his own way.

Aram went to Mourad and told him about the missing horse of Byro and asked him not to return the horse until he learns to ride it. Mourad told him that it would take a year to learn. He further angrily added that they could not be thieves as their tribe is known for the truthfulness and said that they would return the horse after six months.

One morning on the way to return the horse they came across farmer John Byro who was on his way to town. He asked him politely if could inspect the horse and look into his mouth. The farmer examined the horse and asked his name.

Mourad replied that they called it *My Heart*'. He was pretty sure that it was the horse which had been stolen from him many weeks ago.. But since the family is known for their morality, he would not call it the stolen horse rather called it the twin of his own horse.

That afternoon John Byro came to their house and showed the narrator's mother the horse that had been stolen and returned. He was surprised to find the horse stronger than ever and better tempered too. Uncle Khosrov became irritated and shouted at him to be quiet. He observed that his horse had been returned and repeated his pet phrase:

"Pay no attention to it". The next morning, the boys took the horse to John Byro's vineyard and put it in the barn. Mourad put his arms around the horse, pressed his nose into the horse's nose, patted it, and then they went away.

That afternoon, John Byro came and shared the return of his horse to Aram's mother, he added that now the horse had improved temperament better and stronger.

Uncle Khosrove again roared his same dialogue," Your horse has returned, pay no attention to it.

Question and Answers

Q1. What moral lesson do you learn from this story, "the summer of the beautiful white horse"?

The story revolves around two cousins who yearn to ride a horse but could not afford to buy as they belong to a poor tribe. They fulfill their desire by stealing a beautiful horse from Byro's barn. Mourad very cunningly rides it all alpine every morning. By seeing this, Aram also wants to keep the horse till he learns to ride.

But as soon they both met john byro and felt his pain of losing a beautiful white horse their conscience hit them hard and the very next morning they returned their horse and Mourad patted his nose into his nose. And John byro did not take any action against them he was

mesmerized by their generosity and instead of calling them as thieves and making them feel guilty in front of all, he very cleverly shared the news of returning his horse to Aram's mother and was happy that the horse had become polite and strong. He understood the young mind's desire and positive approach.

Q2. What is the theme of the story of the summer of a beautiful white horse?

The central theme of this beautiful text lays thrust on the challenges of traditions and long-established beliefs. The Garoghlanian tribe was always known for its honesty and still the older generations of the impoverished tribe uphold their trademark of honesty but the posterity is not at all ready to hold this label so far. In fact, there were already elements in the family with hidden characters like Mourad and Aram, who questioned their traditional virtues to enjoy the pleasures of the world.

Class 11 - English Core

THE SUMMER OF THE BEAUTIFUL WHITE HORSE

(The Answers given are just for your idea. Develop your own answers.)

I. Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Write a brief note on the Garoghlanian tribe.

Ans: The Garoghlanian family lived in poverty. They were proud of their family. Although the tribe was poor, they were known for their honesty for eleven centuries. They were honest, proud and always believed in right and wrong. No one from the family would ever steal anything or would take advantage of anyone in the world.

2. What were the two things for which the Garoghlanian family was famous?

Ans: The Garoghlanian family was famous for the following two things:

- a. Their poverty
- b. Their honesty

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

Ans: Aram justified 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 further by saying that if one was so 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 it was the last thing they would ever be doing.

4. Why could Aram not believe his eyes when his cousin Mourad called him early one summer morning?

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 famous for their honesty and therefore, Mourad could not have stolen the horse either.

5. Describe narrator's experience when he rode the white horse alone?

Ans: The narrator had a frightful experience when he rode the horse alone. He leapt to the back of the horse but it did not move. As advised by Mourad, he kicked into the muscles of the horse

It reared and snorted and then began to run. It ran down the road to a vineyard and leapt over the vines. As it leapt over the seventh vine the narrator fell off the horse. The horse continued running.

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

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

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

Ans: The farmer examined the horse when 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 ago. 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.

8. 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 after riding it every morning.

9. 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 in his surrey pulled by his horse. He 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 now stronger than ever and better tempered too. Therefore, he thanked God.

II. Long Answer Type Questions-

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 has suspense in the story which made it interesting for the readers. It is a good psychological narration. Both the boys wanted to try something adventurous. As their families were poor they could not afford to own a horse, but they both wanted to ride a horse. Mourad stole a beautiful white horse and they both rode it for quite some time. Riding the stolen horse and hiding it safely are feats of adventure for the two boys. Readers eagerly follow the course of action taken by the two boys. After they were seen with horse by the owner John Byro, who believes the Garoghlanian family which is well known for its honesty says that he does not suspect them. This makes the boys to return the horse to its original place and owner. This ending to the story heightens its appeal to the readers.

2. Why did the two boys ultimately return the horse all of a sudden although they had planned to keep it for at least 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 next 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 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 to 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.

3. 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 by 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 rebuked. Khosrove also asked John Byro not to worry about the horse or the loss of money or even 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 riding is an example to prove the same. Like the 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.

4. Listening to the conscience helps one to do the right. Give your own view in context to the chapter, "The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse".

Ans: Listening to the conscience undoubtedly helps one to do the right things, as we have seen in the chapter. Mourad stole the horse of John Byro just for the sake of riding it, and he did not have the intention of keeping it. He along with his cousin Aram rode the horse and hide it in a deserted barn. Even after John Byro the owner of the horse complained about his missing horse the boys continued to ride it. They loved riding it and wanted to satisfy their passion for riding. After many days John Byro accidently sees the boys with his horse but keeping in view the reputation of the Garoghlanian family's honesty, he does not doubt the boys. He says it was the twin of his horse. This evokes the guilty conscience of Mourad. He with his cousin returned the horse to its owner the next morning. Our conscience is our moral compass. The voice of the conscience never motivates anyone to do wrong. Therefore, before doing anything if we listen to our conscience we will never do wrong.
