



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2024-25)  
CLASS – XI  
THE SUMMER OF THE BEAUTIFUL WHITE HORSE

**CENTRAL IDEA OF THE STORY-**

“The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse” is a story about two Armenian boys, who belong to a tribe that despite poverty is known for its honesty. The boys take a horse, which does not belong to them, due to their love for horse riding but are conscience –stricken and hence return it to its owner.”

**SUMMARY** - This is a story of two migrant Armenian boys who belonged to the Garoghlanian tribe. For their family, even at 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 story opens with Mourad coming to Aram's house at four in the morning one fine day. When Aram looked out of the window, he was taken aback and startled to see Mourad riding a beautiful white horse. 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 kept the horse for 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 it. One fine day they came across John Byro, the farmer. He was amazed at the resemblance and said: “I would swear it is my horse if I did not know your parents.” Such was the boys' family fame for their honesty. John does not accuse the boys. 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 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.

**THEMES**

The two main themes in “The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse” are the conflict between feelings and reason, and the importance of character and reputation.

**The conflict between feelings and reason:**

Throughout the story, Aram and Mourad are caught between what they feel and what they know. When Aram first sees Mourad riding the white horse, he knows that Mourad must have stolen it, as his family is too poor to afford a horse. Yet he feels that this cannot be the case, for his family is always honest. As Aram greatly desires to ride the horse, he begins to make justifications for why they are not stealing, knowing that he cannot go against his family’s honest reputation. Aram and Mourad continue to make decisions based on feelings rather than reason, such as when Mourad decides that keeping the horse for six months isn’t stealing, whereas keeping it a year would be.

When the boys meet John Byro near the end of the story, Byro refuses to accuse them of theft and decides to “believe with his heart instead of his eyes.” He chooses faith over reason and lets the boys go. The fact that Mourad tells Byro that the horse’s name is “My Heart” is symbolic: the boys justify their keeping and riding the horse with their hearts and not with reason. In the end, Byro’s comments to the boys prevent their desires from clouding their reasoning any longer, and they return the horse the next day.

**The importance of character and reputation:** The Garoghlanians pride themselves on and are well known for their honesty. Though they live in extreme poverty, they do not steal, valuing honesty over wealth and their reputation over whatever they might gain through stealing.

Aram and Mourad, for the most part, remain loyal to this reputation: while they do temporarily take a horse that doesn’t belong to them, they are unwilling to “steal” it outright, and they make justifications for their actions. When their guilt from John Byro’s comments about their family’s honest reputation causes them to rethink their justifications, they immediately return the horse, not willing to be labeled as thieves or to harm their family’s legacy.

In the end, the Garoghlanian family’s honesty saves Aram and Mourad. Byro observes that the horse they are riding looks exactly like his own, but he chooses to believe that it is not his horse based on the honest reputation of their family. Whether he knows the horse is his or not, Byro trusts the boys and does not go to their parents about the matter. Aram and Mourad’s honesty in returning the horse is rewarded; if Byro knew that they stole it, he doesn’t say so and instead remarks that his horse is better-tempered and healthier than ever. In a way, Byro’s own gentleness of character pays off too: he is slow to accuse the boys and trusts their integrity, and his horse is returned the very next day.

### **TEXTUAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Q1- 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 has a good psychological narration. However, the element that makes it all the more engaging is the smooth flow of emotional narration. This has been addressed from the perspective of a nine-year-old boy. Both the boys, Mourad and Aram 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. They were seen with horse by the owner John Byro. He trusts the Garoghlanian family which is well known for its honesty and says that he does not suspect them. The same streak of honesty is also present in them. After a while, they overcome their desire and return the horse to its rightful owner. This ending to the story heightens its appeal to the readers.

Q2- Did the boys return the horse because they were conscience-stricken or because they were afraid?

Ans- In the entire story, the boys have been characterized as fearless. It was their passion and desire towards riding a horse that made them steal the horse. When they had the horse for several months, the farmer John Byro visited their house and complained that his horse was missing.

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. John Byro recognized his horse however, did not say anything to the boys or accuse them, rather honoring their family for its honesty. This was the circumstance when the conscience-stricken boys decided to return the horse to the rightful owner.

### **EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS**

**Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.**

1. *“It wasn’t morning yet, but it was summer and with day break not many minutes around the corner of the world it was light enough for me to know I wasn’t dreaming. My cousin Mourad was sitting on a beautiful white horse. I stuck my head out of the window and rubbed my eyes. Yes, he said in Armenian. It’s a horse. You are not dreaming. Make it quick if you want to ride.”*

i. Who is the narrator of the story “The Summer of a Beautiful White Horse”?

- (a) William Saroyan
- (b) Aram**
- (c) John Byro
- (d) Mourad

ii. Why couldn’t Aram believe when he saw Mourad with the horse?

- (a) Because Mourad was crazy and did crazy things
- (b) Because they were too poor to afford a horse**
- (c) Because he was sleepy and would not see well in the faint light
- (d) Because he was dreaming and was rudely woken up

iii. ‘Make it quick’ here means .....

- (a) to be sad
- (b) to hurry up**
- (c) to hide
- (d) to be content

iv. Why did Mourad wake his cousin up?

Ans- Mourad woke Aram up in order to give him a chance to enjoy horse riding.

2. *“I would swear it is my horse if I didn’t know your parents. The fame of your family for honesty is well known to me. Yet the horse is the twin of my horse. A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart. Good day, my young friends.”*

i. Who was John Byro?

Ans-John Byro was an Assyrian farmer who lived in the neighbourhood and was a frequent visitor to Aram’s house.

ii. Who was the true owner of the horse?

- (a) John Byro**
- (b) Fetvajian
- (c) Dikran Halabian
- (d) Zorab

iii. John Byro said, “A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart.” What does it tell about him?

**(a) He believed in the honesty of Garoghlanian family**

(b) He was impractical and vain person

(c) He was foolish and believed the boys

(d) None of the above

iv. Why did the horse's owner refuse to believe that the boys had stolen his horse?

(a) Because he didn't examine the horse carefully

**(b) Because their family was known for honesty**

(c) Because he had found his horse elsewhere

(d) Because his horse had a twin

**ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN 30-40 WORDS.**

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 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.

3. Why could Aram not believe his eyes when his cousin Mourad called him one early 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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 for it.

9. "A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart." In what context was this observation made and by whom?

Ans- This observation was made by farmer John Byro after looking into the mouth of the horse. It matched his horse tooth for tooth. He would have claimed it as his own horse if he had not known their parents or the fame of their family for honesty. The resemblance was so striking that he called it the twin of his horse.

10. What do you think, induced the boys to return the horse to its owner?

Ans- The boys were impressed by John Byro's attitude towards their parents and family. He knew their parents very well and so believed whatever the boys said. Secondly, the fame of their family for honesty was well-known to him. The conscience-stricken boys decided to return the horse to the rightful owner. The boys returned the horse to him for the sake of family pride and dignity.

### **ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN 100-120 WORDS.**

1 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.

Q2 Mourad was the natural descendant of the crazy streak of uncle Khosrove. Explain the statement giving instances from the story.

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 painning 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.

Q3 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 hid 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.

Q4 Justify the title "The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse".

Ans- The title seems quite appropriate for the timbre of the story. Initially, one can suggest that it is set in a summer- like time period. The boys can focus on the horse, and are not necessarily burdened with school work. Additionally, the ideas presented in the story lend themselves with the fruition and full bloom of summer. These ideas relate to maturation, experiences, and companionship. The story revolves around this beautiful white horse. Initially, we know that the boys are poor. They are of an immigrant Armenian family that is not wealthy. We know this because it is inconceivable that either of the boys would own a white horse. The fact that Aram is awakened one morning by Mourad sitting atop a white horse prompts Aram to question if it was stolen. From abject or dirt poverty to a stunningly white horse, one sees that the horse is a symbol, a representation of the boys' desires. Throughout their summer experiences with the horse, they learn essential values such as compassion for the animal, trust amongst themselves, honesty and dignity. These come about as a result of the beautiful horse. The story reaches its climax when the horse is returned, in better shape and temperament than before, and the boys have a renewed sense of faith in both themselves and their love of the horse. The short story is aptly titled for each part of it relates to an experience with the beautiful horse in the story.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Mourad was considered the natural descendant of his \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) father
  - (b) uncle**
  - (c) grandfather
  - (d) great-grandfather
  
2. What did uncle Khosrove do to stop anyone from talking?
  - (a) By beating them
  - (b) By walking away
  - (c) By shouting at them**
  - (d) By ignoring them
  
3. What was uncle Khosrove's customary line?
  - (a) Ignore it; pay no attention of it.
  - (b) Forget it. It is harmless don't worry.
  - (c) It is harmless; ignore it or forget it
  - (d) It is no harm; pay no attention to it.**
  
4. What sort of an understanding did Mourad mention that he had with the horse?
  - (a) Mature and meek
  - (b) Simple and honest**
  - (c) Complicated and open
  - (d) Difficult and candid
  
5. John Byro learned to speak Armenian out of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) necessity
  - (b) fun
  - (c) eagerness
  - (d) loneliness**
  
6. At what time did Aram and Mourad ride the horse?
  - (a) Late night
  - (b) Early morning**
  - (c) Evening
  - (d) Afternoon hours
  
7. "I have a way with farmers." Who says it to whom?
  - (a) Aram to Mourad
  - (b) Mourad to John Byro
  - (c) Aram to John Byro
  - (d) Mourad to Aram**
  
8. Why did the boys return the white horse to its owner?
  - (a) Because they were conscience-stricken**

- (b) Because they were afraid
- (c) Because they found it difficult to hide the horse
- (d) Because they were accused of theft

### **ASSERTION AND REASON BASED QUESTIONS**

For each of the following assertions, choose the correct reason from the options provided.

Q1 Assertion: Aram was surprised to see Mourad on a white horse.

Reason:

- (a) Aram had never seen a horse before.
- (b) Aram thought he was dreaming.
- (c) Mourad had stolen the horse.
- (d) Aram was happy for Mourad.

Q2 Assertion: The boys hid the horse in a barn.

Reason:

- (a) To protect the horse from thieves.
- (b) To keep it safe from John Byro.
- (c) They wanted to sell the horse later.
- (d) To enjoy its ride in cool air.

Q3 Assertion: John Byro didn't suspect the boys of stealing his horse.

Reason:

- (a) He didn't know the horse well.
- (b) The boys' family had a reputation for honesty.
- (c) John was not a very observant person.
- (d) John knew the boys had stolen the horse.

Q4 Assertion: The story teaches the importance of honesty.

Reason:

- (a) The boys wanted to keep the horse for themselves.
- (b) John Byro was a dishonest man.
- (c) Aram's family was known for their dishonesty.
- (d) The boys returned the stolen horse despite their desire to keep it.

### **ANSWERS-**

Q1- Ans - b

Aram was astonished by the sight of Mourad on a horse, and his surprise is due to thinking it might be a dream.

Q2- Ans - b

The boys hid the horse in a barn not to enjoy its ride but to keep it concealed.

Q3- Ans - b

John trusted the boys because of their family's honest reputation, which is why he didn't suspect them of stealing.

Q4- Ans - d

The story conveys the importance of honesty by showing that the boys returned the stolen horse, even though it conflicted with their ethics.