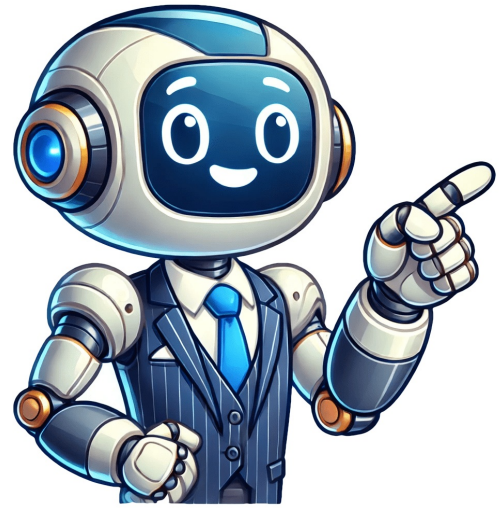


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Murakami wrote the short story "The Seventh Man" in 1996, drawing his inspiration from a dream while engaged in surfing. His preoccupation lies with the consequences of childhood trauma in an adult's life with its set of challenges. Thrusting on the power of nature and its sublime effect on the narrator, the author delivers a compelling narrative that advises its readers to put up a fight against their fears and escape its inscribable web. The story opens with a frame narrative that introduces the character of the seventh man who is narrating a story from his past comprising of an encounter with nature's power in the form of a typhoon which Japan as an island country often experiences. The past then transforms the man into the narrator who recalls losing his best friend K to a huge sea wave when he fails to hear the narrator's warning. Witnessing his friend being swallowed by the sea, the narrator falls unconscious and views K resting at the tip of a wave attempting to grab him and take him to another world. This fear elongates, gradually translating into trauma and compelling the narrator to leave his hometown. After forty years, he revisits the shore where he saw K for the last time, and unable to bear the pain, he resorts to finding solace in K's seascape paintings which he has gifted to the narrator. Surprisingly, they help him to re-establish his relationship with nature, especially the sea. The narrator is able to overcome his past with the eventual realization that his nightmares are not K's anguish at his friend's failure to protect him but rather a departing smile. Confronting is what releases the narrator from the chains of horrifying memories and enables him to move forward in his life to live the remaining years of his life. The story is a powerful reminder of how childhood trauma can shape our lives and how we can overcome it. The story is a powerful reminder of how childhood trauma can shape our lives and how we can overcome it. The story is a powerful reminder of how childhood trauma can shape our lives and how we can overcome it.