

# The narrator in araby literature review examples

[Life](#), [Love](#)



The narrator in James Joyce's *Araby* is a mere boy of the age of nine or ten years. Although we see Dublin the way this little boy has described it, we find little warmth or joyousness in it, although the innocent little boy seems to think that whatever he sees around himself is very much normal. It is however pretty clear, that though this narration is of a little boy, the words are actually from someone who is a lot more mature.

The boy seems to be infatuated with Mangan's sister. He believes that she is his true love. He stalks her on the street, on his way to school as well as from his window, with the blinds closed; he even offers prayers for her, murmuring: "O love! O love!" quite a few times in the dead priest's drawing room. It is quite clear that this is a mere childish infatuation, rather than love, as we later go on to find his surprise when she finally stops him on the street to ask him whether he was going to Araby. And it is exactly because on this childish infatuation, that he offers to bring something for her from the "bazaar" in the first place, as he probably would not have bothered to go, had she not asked him about it.

The little boy gets his first disappointment, from his uncle, who had come home late on the fateful day he was supposed to go to the bazaar. The latter had promised him that he would not be late, but as everything else in this decaying city, he could not keep his promise. What makes it worse is that his uncle comes home way past the normal dinner time, and he was probably drunk too, as we see the boy telling us - "I could interpret these signs." Interpret as he may, it could not change the fact that he was going to the Araby, at an hour that was too late for anyone decent. Perhaps this is reminiscent of the time in Dublin or Ireland at that moment of time in

history. Perhaps this is why Joyce himself went on a self-imposed exile. Innocent as he is, the boy does not care about all this. All he wants to do is to bring Mangan's sister a souvenir from the Araby. As he reaches the bazaar, he finds it almost empty - all that he has probably read and heard about the variety of wares, the hustle and bustle, the sights and smells of the bazaars from the oriental world - all that he was expecting from this fair, he found to be a lie. He still soldiers on through the bazaar, clinging against his dying hopes that he would be able to find something suitable to bring back for Mangan's sister.

All his hopes however are dashed into pieces, as he meets a rude woman, who only seems interested in flirting with two Englishmen, rather than selling her wares. It is clear that the little boy - probably an alter ego of James Joyce himself, has become an adult, that is, he has reached a maturity, both artistic and otherwise, beyond most grown men, who are twice his age. This is the epiphany in the boy's life, or Joyce's artistic life. He now sees everything for what they truly are - the rotting city of Dublin around him; the Araby, a mere shadow of a bazaar from the east; and Mangan's sister (whom he had once put on the pedestal and worshiped) who is a mere mortal, with all her follies and flawed views of life and religion. All his life had been leading up to this moment of epiphany at the Araby, where, in one night, in one hour, neigh in one minute this innocent little boy transforms into a fully mature man. Ironically thought, this is the moment when he " heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out."

**Sources:**

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