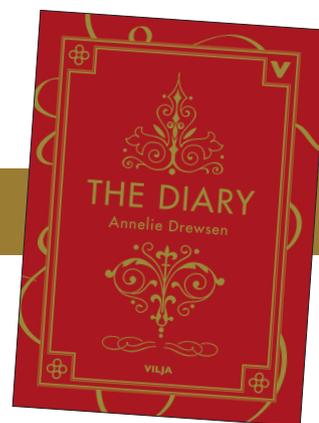


ANNELIE DREWSEN
translated by Hedda Friberg-Harnesk

The Diary



ABOUT THE BOOK

Tarek is learning Swedish and he hates it. He does not feel at home here and it is so difficult to learn the language. One day, a new teacher arrives. She asks the students to write a diary. That changes everything for Tarek.

DISCUSS

In this book, there is a turning point, a moment when things change for the main character. What is the turning point? (The new teacher and her methods.)

What is the difference between the two teachers? How important is the teacher? How important is the student's own attitude?

"The more languages you know, the better you will be at them." Is this true? How many languages do the students speak? Make a list.

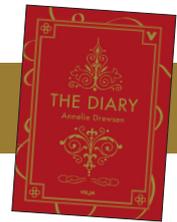
Why does Åsa ask her students to write a diary? What is good about writing a diary?

Tarek writes a text about his mother. What is this text like? What can you say about it? (Examples: It is poetic, emotional, literary, very positive.)

Together in class, translate the text about Tarek's mother into Swedish. Try to give it the same tone.

WRITING

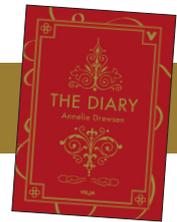
What do the students think happens after the ending of the book? Have them write a few lines about Tarek's life.



EXERCISES WITH KEY

Questions

1. How is Tarek introduced in the first chapter? What do we learn about him?
He smokes. He is always late for school. He is learning Swedish.
2. What are Tarek's thoughts about languages?
Words in his own language means something. They are full of memories and tastes. He can smell and taste his language. The words in the new language do not smell or taste anything. There are no memories or dreams in them.
3. What do the teacher's red pencil marks make Tarek think of?
They make him think of the wounds on his father's hands and the hole in his chest. His father was shot.
4. How does Tarek feel about home?
The room and the house are not his home. The city is not his city. At home does not exist any longer. At home died.
5. What happens one day at school?
Another teacher opens the door. Åsa is the substitute teacher.
6. What is different with Åsa and how does that change for Tarek?
Åsa reads aloud and for Tarek, the words come alive.
7. Suddenly, Tarek feels happy. Why?
When Åsa reads, Tarek gets pretty pictures in his head. Åsa will perhaps stay until the summer.
8. With Åsa, Tarek changes. How?
He does not smoke and he is in school on time.
9. In chapter six, Åsa does something that is important for Tarek and for students in general. What is it?
She remembers Tarek's name.
10. What happens during the lesson?
Åsa gives the students a notebook. They will write a diary.
11. What do you write about in a diary?
You write about your life, your thoughts and your feelings. You decide yourself what you want to write.
12. In chapter nine, there are words that make us understand the problems in Tarek's life. What words?
Residence permit, waiting, sleeplessness, headache.
13. What does it feel like for Tarek to write in this new language?
It feels like trying to walk without legs. He falls and harms himself.
14. What does Åsa say when Tarek says that he hates Swedish?
She says that he can write in his own language instead.
15. Why does she say that?
Because Tarek's feelings and thoughts are important.

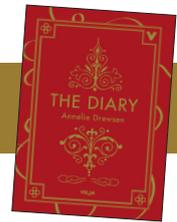


16. Tarek starts writing. What does he write about?
He writes about his mother.
17. Åsa surprises Tarek. How?
She can read Arabic.
18. What does Åsa ask Tarek?
She asks him to explain some Arabic words in Swedish.
19. Why does the word "goldsmith" make Tarek think of his father?
His father was a goldsmith.
20. Tarek is smoking. What does Åsa tell Tarek to do? How does she say it?
She says "That's no good. But you know that already, don't you?"
21. Tarek says that he is going to quit. What does he mean?
He is going to quit writing in Arabic.
22. Again, Åsa surprises Tarek. How?
She says that it is good to write in your own language. The more languages you know, the better you will be at them.
23. How does the book end?
Tarek says that he will write his own story.

Words

Here are 25 Swedish words. Find them in the text. They come in this order.

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|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. trappan | the stairs |
| 2. knacka | knock |
| 3. armbandsur | watch |
| 4. minnen | memories |
| 5. smaker | tastes |
| 6. lukta | smell |
| 7. smak | taste |
| 8. rättat | corrected |
| 9. sår | wounds |
| 10. panna | forehead |
| 11. huvudvärkstablett | pain killer |
| 12. sluta | quit |
| 13. vikarie | substitute teacher |
| 14. rem | strap |
| 15. klinga | jingle |
| 16. prassla | rustle |
| 17. tankar | thoughts |



- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 18. somna | fall asleep |
| 19. uppehållstillstånd | residence permit |
| 20. låna av | borrow |
| 21. byggnad | building |
| 22. viska | whisper |
| 23. i stället | instead |
| 24. fortsätt | keep going |
| 25. öva | practice |