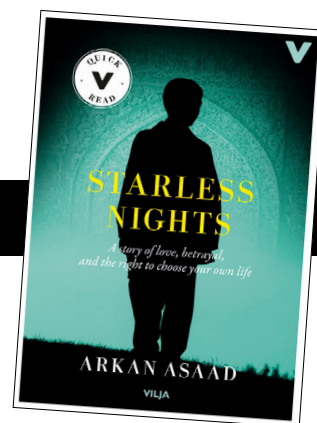


ARKAN ASAAD, translated by Saskia Vogel

Starless Nights



QUESTIONS

There are no chapters in this book, but here it is divided into parts with questions and word exercises on each part. The narrator's (*berättarens*) name is Amàr.

The trip to Iraq (pp. 3–7)

Questions

1. What was the relationship between Amàr and his father like?
2. There was a big difference between Amàr and his father about jobs and family. What was the difference?
3. At the end of this part, we know that something is going to happen. How do we know that?

Words

Find these words in the text.

1. syskon _____
2. upprorisk _____
3. tjatade på mig _____
4. förväntade sig att jag _____
5. släktingar _____
6. hade övergett, svikit _____
7. hade lämnat, övergett _____



Arriving in Iraq (pp. 8–15)

Questions

4. What happened when Amàr went out into the kitchen to wash the dishes?
5. A whole new world had opened up for Amàr. In what way?

Words

Pair the English words with the Swedish words. Write the correct figures on the lines.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1. border | _____ | diska |
| 2. rumpled | _____ | gränd |
| 3. amount | _____ | gräns |
| 4. immediate | _____ | jämlikhet |
| 5. was supposed to be | _____ | mängd |
| 6. alley | _____ | närmaste |
| 7. approximately | _____ | skrynklig |
| 8. beamed | _____ | strålande |
| 9. wash the dishes | _____ | ungefär |
| 10. equality | _____ | var tänkt att bli |

Marriage (pp. 16–29)

6. What was unusual about Amina?
7. In this part, there are examples of different attitudes to love and marriage. What are the different attitudes?
8. Amàr overheard Reza, his father, his grandmother, his aunts and Amina whispering about something. When he entered the room, they stopped whispering. What do you think they were whispering about?
9. What was Amàr's father talking about all the time?
10. Everything changed. Why?
11. What did the two aunts say that shocked Amàr?
12. Why did Amàr think that it was sick to marry Amina?



Words

Pair the English words with the Swedish words. Write the correct figures on the lines.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1. suggested | _____ | ansvar |
| 2. extended | _____ | brorson (systemson) |
| 3. surviving | _____ | föreslog |
| 4. unfamiliar | _____ | förlängd |
| 5. hardly | _____ | höll med |
| 6. despite | _____ | ilska |
| 7. unusual | _____ | knappt |
| 8. nephew | _____ | kryddad |
| 9. thoughtful | _____ | okänd |
| 10. agreed with | _____ | omtänksam |
| 11. gathered | _____ | ovanligt |
| 12. snuck | _____ | samlades |
| 13. be ashamed | _____ | skämmas |
| 14. responsibility | _____ | smög |
| 15. rage | _____ | trots |
| 16. seasoned | _____ | överleva |

Father's heart attack (pp 30–43)

Questions

13. What does Samir ask Amàr to do?
14. Why did Amàr's father hit him?
15. Amàr heard his aunts screaming and crying. What had happened?
16. What does Amina think of the marriage?
17. How does this part end?



Words

Fill in the blanks. The words are all in the text in this part.

1. I heard everyone _____ in the _____ room to talk to him.
2. I've had such good _____ with everything – finding a _____ and a place to _____.
3. I know you will be _____ with Amina, because she is your _____.
4. The day after the _____ with Father, I heard my aunts screaming and _____.
5. All day trips were _____.
6. I had _____ my father and my family by being _____ toward Father in front of others.
7. If you had _____ to marry Amina, this _____ never have happened.
8. I know of nothing on this earth that _____ make him _____ than to see us married.
9. I had to tell them I'd changed my _____ and needed time to think about it.
10. I wanted to tell him that I had made a big _____ and that I didn't want to get _____.



The wedding (pp 44–53)

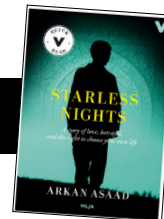
Questions

18. What was the difference between Sweden and Iraq, thought Amàr?
19. Here, we get an explanation of the title *Starless Nights*. What is the explanation?
20. Amàr’s father explained what had happened. What did he say?
21. Here is a reference to the title, *Starless Nights*. What was the sky like on the night of the wedding?

Words

Pair the Swedish words with the English words.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1. din blivande man | _____ | a single |
| 2. jag brydde mig inte | _____ | a pile |
| 3. en enda | _____ | carried out |
| 4. tjusig | _____ | devastated |
| 5. hellre | _____ | fancy |
| 6. flämtade | _____ | I didn't care |
| 7. andfådd | _____ | out of breath |
| 8. skakade hand med mig | _____ | panted |
| 9. genomförde | _____ | rather |
| 10. en hög | _____ | shook my hand |
| 11. förstörd | _____ | smothered |
| 12. kvävde, dämpade | _____ | your future husband |



Going back to Sweden (pp 54–60)

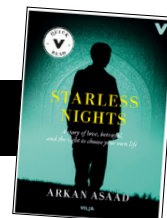
Questions

22. What did Amàr’s father want Amàr to do?
23. What two things does Amàr have to do for Amina?
24. Why could Amàr not tell his friends what had happened?
25. What did Amàr do for a whole year? Why?

Words

Find these words in the text.

1. gravid _____
2. tutade _____
3. trösta _____
4. lön _____
5. ansöka om _____
6. framför dig _____
7. hantera _____
8. att hyra _____
9. studenthem _____
10. fyllde 21 _____



The Swedish Embassy (pp 61–64)

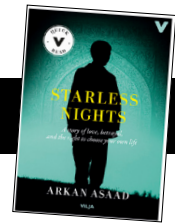
Questions

26. What did Amàr and Amina do at the Swedish Embassy?
27. Why did Amàr feel happy?
28. What would Amina do?

Verbs in the past

In each of these sentences, a verb in the past tense (*förfluten tid*) is missing. Find the verbs in the text and fill in the blanks.

1. We _____ a taxi to the Syrian border.
2. I _____ that she was valuable.
3. The worst was when we _____ to the hotel in Damascus the first day.
4. That night, I _____ on the floor.
5. I _____ so happy.
6. I _____ Amina the news.
7. Father _____ someone in Syria who helped Amina find a place to live.



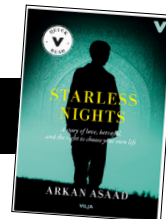
Shilan (pp 65–69)

Questions

- 29. Where did Amàr’s money go when he got back to Sweden?
- 30. How did Amàr meet Shilan?
- 31. Why did Amàr like Shilan so much?
- 32. When Amàr and Shilan had been together for ten months, problems started coming up. What problems?
- 33. Amàr lied to Shilan. What did he say?

Shilan

Find words and expressions that describe Shilan. Both her looks and what she is like as a person.



Back to Syria (pp 70–75)

Questions

- 34. Why is Amina ashamed?
- 35. There is a phone call from Amina’s father. He threatens (*hotar*) Amàr. What does he say?
- 36. Why was Amina scared?

Words

Pick at least six words that you want to learn. Translate them into Swedish.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



The Swedish Migration Authority (76–88)

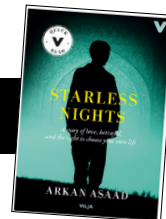
Questions

37. What happened when the caseworker asked Amàr if he loved Amina?
38. Amàr wanted the Migration Authority to promise something. What?
39. Do the Migration Authority keep their promise?
40. What did Amàr want them to write?
41. How does Shilan react when Amàr tells her the truth?
42. How did this part end?

Words

Find these words in the text. They all have to do with the Swedish Migration Authority.

1. Migrationsverket _____
2. receptionsdisk _____
3. besöksstol _____
4. uppehållstillstånd _____
5. handläggare _____
6. högste chef _____
7. avslå _____
8. ansökan _____
9. beslut _____
10. hade inkommit med, hade skickat in _____
11. avslag _____



Father's reaction (pp 89–94)

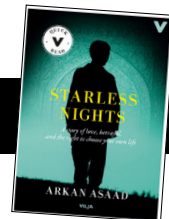
Summary

- 43. Write a summary of this part, based on these keywords: the phone rang, take back everything, kill Amàr and Shilan, heart attack, Amína, Father is sick, train to Stockholm

Adjectives

Find these adjectives in the text.

- 1. lugn _____
- 2. stjärnklar _____
- 3. rädd _____
- 4. allvarlig _____
- 5. tyst _____
- 6. hård _____
- 7. sjuk _____
- 8. svag _____



Samir (95–101)

Questions

44. Something terrible happened. What?
45. What did Amàr have to do?
46. Why must Amina not see that Amàr was sad?

Words

Find these sentences in the text.

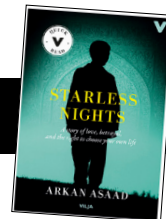
1. Varför var det alltid de goda människorna som måste dö?

2. Jag fick uppdraget att åka till England.

3. Sedan skulle jag åka och besöka Amina och bo där ett tag.

4. Gör det rätta.

5. Vi pratade nästan inte alls innan jag la mig ner för att sova.



With Amina in Damaskus (pp 102–106)

Questions

- 47. Because her husband seldom visited her, Amina had never got to see much outside her home. Why is that so, do you think?
- 48. What did Amina say when Amàr asked her if she was not afraid if she could not come to Sweden?
- 49. What are these people’s feelings towards Amàr? Amina, Shilan and Father.
- 50. How did this part end?

Words

Pick at least six words that you would like to learn. Translate them into Swedish.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Alone again (pp 107–115)

Questions

- 51. Amàr was desperate. What did he do?
- 52. Amàr’s father was ashamed that his son tried to take his own life. What did he say?
- 53. What did Amina’s parents demand?

Words

IV = dropp

Find these words in the text.

gips	bultande	sms	röstmeddelande
trassel	kröp	skuld	vanhedrat, skämt ut

- 1. gips _____
- 2. pounding _____
- 3. text message _____
- 4. voicemail _____
- 5. tangle _____
- 6. crept _____
- 7. debt _____
- 8. disgraced _____