“Daughter of Keltoum”
Questions for Discussion

1. At the beginning of the film, Rallia is on the bus, and it stops so that people can get out. What are they doing? Rallia’s failure to join them shows that she is different from the others. What are other signs of that difference?

2. Who is the first person she meets when she arrives in the region of her birth? Who else does she meet soon afterwards?

3. Why is much of the movie in French? Drawing from your knowledge of the region’s history, why does everyone speak French?

4. How is rural life (in the Berber village) different from life in the West – or even from life in an Algerian town or city?

5. What kind of work does Rallia’s aunt do? Her grandfather? Why does Rallia find this work challenging?

6. Throughout the movie, we encounter people who are physically handicapped or psychologically scarred. How are these people treated in the rural areas of North Africa?

7. When Keltoum doesn’t arrive on Friday, Rallia says sarcastically, “Has she abandoned you too?” What does the young woman eventually reveal to Nedjma about her feelings toward her birth mother?

8. Why do you think that Nejma goes with her young visitor on her quest to find Keltoum?

9. What happens when Rallia defies convention and goes into the café (a men’s hang-out) looking for water?

10. What do the women learn about the woman who was kicked out by her husband? Why did her husband repudiate her, and what does the woman plan to do?

11. What happens when the three women encounter some resistance fighters?

12. What happens when Nejma sees “the truck drinking”? What does this reveal about Nejma’s experience in life?

13. What does Nejma tell Rallia about the issue of water in the mountains of Algeria?
14. What happens when bandits hold up the truck in which the women are riding?

15. What does Rallia witness while visiting the village inhabited by women and children? Why do you think there are no men in the village during the visit?

16. On the bus, Nejma encounters a man who gives her (and Rallia) a pomegranate. What occurs between them (on the bus and afterward)?

17. The bus stops before curfew, and all the passengers stay at a caravanserai. Describe what accommodations are like there.

18. Rallia meets another European woman in the caravanserai. What else do they have in common?

19. What happens to the Belgian woman at the truck stop?

20. What happens between Rallia and Nejma when they try to transfer to a different bus? Who eventually wins out and why?

21. Who did the women encounter on the road? Why is this encounter a very dangerous situation? How do the women thwart the man?

22. When the women arrive at El Kentara, what “wonders” astonish Nejma? (Consider the geographical features of the area and the style of the hotel.)

23. What does Nejma learn about Rallia when the two are hidden in the supply closet of the hotel? How does the older woman react?

24. What happens when Rallia and Keltoum meet? How does Keltoum react?

25. What does Keltoum tell her about the circumstances of her birth? How does this story shed new light on what Rallia knows of the life and people in the village of her birth?

26. What do you think about Keltoum’s personality and her actions? Do you think her concern to help the people of her village justify what she has done?

27. What transpires between Rallia and Nejma after Keltoum’s account?

28. The film ends with Rallia leaving the village where she arrived at the beginning of the story, and she is dressed the same as when she arrived. Do you think that Rallia is the same person as she was at the beginning, or has she changed because of the events of the film? Explain the reasons for your answer.

29. Do you think that Nejma has changed because of her experiences during Rallia’s visit? Explain the reasons for your answer.