**Questions for Babette’s Feast**

(The page numbers refer to the Danish version)

1. What is this book really about?
2. Karen Blixen / Isak Dinesen referred to herself as a story-teller. How do you see her story: fairy tale, moral tale, novella, adventure, romance? And what is a story-teller?
3. How does she construct her story?
4. What is the significance of the background story up to Babette’s arrival?
5. Characterize the minister, his daughters, his congregation, the community, their livelihood, remoteness, the manor and its function.
6. The paradox: earthly love and marriage is unimportant to the congregation – so how can they survive? (Parallels to the Shakers, maybe?) – and where did they come from originally?
7. Lorens Löwenhielm – and that which is impossible – what is it? (p. 12 cf. p. 72)
8. What is Martine’s reaction to her sister’s gentle, prodding questions about Lorens and why? Is she a cold person?
9. What connects Papin and Philippa? Why does she keep his words a secret, and why does she withdraw?
10. What is the discrepancy in Papin’s letter six years later between his visions and the reality surrounding the sisters?
11. The author jumps around in time – first, going back 60 years, then, in the story, 14 years ahead, and finally, 30 years ahead – what is the point?
12. Characterize the difference between Babette’s spiritual depth and that of the sisters – the pious Lutherans vs. the mysterious Papist.
13. The language as a barrier or a communication? It appears Babette understands the sisters even with her flawed language. Do they understand her?
14. The religious aspects are permeating the story – how is religion used? – for the sisters, especially with their pious acceptance of Babette’s worlds, and Babette’s fatalism – and how is religion distinguishable from witchcraft?
15. Is the turtle comic relief – or what?
16. Why twelve visitors!!
17. Describe the difference between the young and old Löwenhielm – and what is happening to him and his thoughts about his immortal soul? What is the distinction between dreams and reality, and how does vanity play a role?
18. Foreshadowing – important narrative trick – p. 57: for Löwenhielm, the lowly food will confirm the choices he has made in his life.
19. What is the gist of Löwenhielm’s speech?
20. What is the power of food? – does food have power? And if yes, why don’t we eat better food???
21. Connect the ending to the sentence on p. 24 in Papin’s letter as well as the theme of the story.