Meeting 3: chapters 20 to 28

Songs of Dust and Water, by M.J. Hydara. This meeting covers pages 151 to 224. Each question gives the pages it is about.

1. Musa, the head of Sirawol, admits that men from his village broke the culvert, the stone channel under Nafawol's new road. Mamadou's first question is about the Sirawol herd boy who broke his arm years before, running from Nafawol's night guards. Why do you think Mamadou starts there? (pages 151 to 152)
2. Mamadou's grandson Lamin has taken money from the fund. At first Mamadou argues for him. Then he sits down and asks the committee to write his own name under Lamin's. What does it cost him? (page 164)
3. Every year at Tobaski, the Feast of Sacrifice, Mamadou's household sends a bowl of meat to Kadiatou's. This year the children of his compound carry their bowls past her gate. Near dusk Lamin's mother brings one herself and hands it to Mariam without a word. What is she telling Kadiatou's household? (pages 165 to 166)
4. At the mill scales, Fatou settles how to share the Union's spare money: six parts for the fields, four for the workshops. She says Yaya would walk out if the fields got only five parts, and Aminatu would walk out if they got seven. Hassan's formulas have led nowhere. What does Fatou understand about Yaya and Aminatu that Hassan's sums missed? (page 173)

If you didn't hold the extra get-together after chapter 24, add these two here. If you did, open your sealed result after question 5.

A. Late at night in the mill office, Fatou and Kadiatou argue over the offer from Veldane, a foreign company that wants the first right to buy the Union's crops. Fatou has known real hunger and will not risk it again for the sake of a principle. Kadiatou spent six years handing children bad water because there was nothing else. "I will not have our grandchildren's cup in another man's hand," she says. Where do you stand between them? (page 188)

B. Bintu reads Veldane's draft agreement and finds a clause that would give the company the sole right, for ever, to use anything the Union invents during the partnership. Evelyn Reed of Veldane replaces it with a narrower licence, but she keeps the company's right to block large investments and its first right to buy. What would you want to know before you dropped your stone? (pages 191 to 192)

5. The morning after the vote, before the market opens, Fatou crosses the square to the well and tells Kadiatou how she would have voted. Why does it matter to Fatou that Kadiatou hears it from her, and at the well? (pages 195 to 196)
6. Adam once promised the Minister, "Nobody in Madina will ever need to touch it." On his way to the coast to fly home, he holds a lamp while a stranger mends his pickup. How far has he come, and what is still the same about him? (page 208)
7. Singing at his loom, Ibrahim loses a line of a song, and Talib gives it back to him without looking up. What does the loom mean to father and son now, compared with the first chapter? (page 212)
8. Hawa is now in charge of the maternity ward in Bakoro. She sends her own student to deliver a baby, the way her teacher, the Major, once sent her. Where else in the book is something handed on like that? (pages 213 to 214)