



A Wedding in Ramallah
(Australia/Palestine, 90 minutes)
Director: Sherine Salama
Study Guide

Synopsis

Even in the midst of intense political conflicts, people try to get on with their lives. So it is with Mariam and Bassam, a Palestinian couple who met during the relatively peaceful summer of 2000. This wonderfully observant film follows their relationship from courtship to marriage, and beyond. Bassam, a telephone repairman in Cleveland, returns to Palestine to find a “home-made” bride. He quickly meets and marries the young Mariam, but leaves her in Palestine with his family. Soon afterward, a new intifada takes place and violence erupts throughout Palestine. Life in wartime is brilliantly evoked: people talk on cell phones, quarrel and cook dinner while tanks are shelling buildings a few blocks away. After many months, Bassam is able to procure a visa for Mariam, but she soon discovers that life in exile in the US is not what she expected. This charming film says a great deal about love, courtship, and the roles of women and men in Palestinian society, while touching on the details of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

Study Questions

- What do you know about the conflict in the Middle East?
- How has media coverage affected your views on the situation?
- Have you heard, read or seen any depiction of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories?
- Do you know of other contemporary cultures that have arranged marriages?

Discussion Questions

- Why does Bassam travel all the way back to Ramallah to find a bride even though he is already living in the US?
- Why does Mariam agree to the arrangement?
- What do you think about arranged marriage?
- How would you feel if you did not know the person you were going to marry?
- What do you think about the husband’s expectations of the wives after marriage?
- What do you think Mariam and Bassam need to do to make their marriage work in the US?

