

Ep. 76.5 | Reading Women Award Honorable Mentions

[00:00:09] **Kendra** Hello, I'm Kendra Winchester, here with our co-hosts Sachi Argabright, Jaclyn Masters, and Sumaiyya Naseem. And this is Reading Women, a podcast inviting you to reclaim half the bookshelf by discussing books written by or about women. This is episode 76.5, where we're talking about our honorable mentions for the Reading Women Award.

[00:00:26] **Sachi** You can find a complete transcript and a list of all the books mentioned today linked in our show notes. And don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss a single episode.

[00:00:36] **Kendra** Well, welcome, everyone. I'm so excited to hear the books you have to talk about today.

[00:00:40] **Sachi** It's so exciting!

[00:00:41] **Sumaiyya** Hello!

[00:00:44] **Kendra** So this is something new. We've never done this before. But before this year, we never had as many co-hosts before. So this episode is all about the honorable mentions that Sachi, Jaclyn, and Sumaiyya have. And they each will pick one fiction and one nonfiction pick for their honorable mentions. So I'm just so excited to hear what you guys have to talk about today.

[00:01:06] **Sachi** I'm excited for the opportunity to talk about two books. So thank you for the platform for this! I was thinking last year, I think this was around the time where we were confirming that we were going to be co-hosts and contributors. So I was thinking like, oh, yeah, what are we doing around this time last year? And it's crazy how much has changed in this short amount of one year. So it's really cool that, to mark that, we can talk about some of our honorable mentions for our favorite books this year.

[00:01:39] **Jaclyn** Yeah, and I was really excited to share two of my favorite books of the year, particularly because one of them is an Australian title. And it's one you can get over here, which I feel like is an achievement in itself sometimes. But yeah, I was really excited to share two of my favorite picks for the year with you all.

[00:01:55] **Sumaiyya** Yeah, I can't wait to share what I've selected for this honorable mentions episode.

[00:02:01] **Kendra** Before we get into our honorable mentions, we have some bookish prize news.

[00:02:07] **Jaclyn** Yes, it's been quite a week in the literary prize world.

[00:02:11] **Kendra** Yes. So first we have the two Nobel winners. So if you might remember, last year in 2018, there was no winner. So they announced two this year, one for 2018 and one for 2019. And Olga Tokarczuk won the 2018 Nobel Prize for Literature, which is really fabulous. I do like her.

[00:02:29] **Jaclyn** Yes. And I think that announcement has been very well received in the literary world. I think a lot of people are happy to see her work recognized. And the 2019 winner was Peter Handke.

[00:02:41] **Kendra** This has had a bit of a backlash. He is an Austrian author. It's come out in the news pretty quickly after the announcement that came out was that he has been associated with some war crimes denial, particularly for

[00:02:59] **Jaclyn** Supporting Milosevic in Bosnia.

[00:03:00] **Kendra** But the PEN organization has actually come out with a statement saying that, you know, they don't think that this should have happened, that someone who would deny such war crimes existed and support certain political parties that would do such a thing should have been celebrated with this award, which is really interesting because typically the PEN organization is really in support of authors and free speech and and they do all sorts of different things for authors. But the fact that they are coming out and saying this. . . . I mean, it's not great. And considering how much drama has been with the Nobel Prize, the fact that they speak two people of European descent and—we love Olga, she's fabulous—but you would think that they would try to progress and kind of de-Westernize the prize, but that's definitely not something that they seem to be interested in. So.

[00:03:49] **Jaclyn** Yeah, I know I've seen a lot of criticism online, both on two fronts on that. The fact that it is very Eurocentric still. But also based on the fact that the Nobel is very much like a career recognition award as opposed to something like the Booker, for example, which is very book specific. So this award isn't just isolating his works in a literary sense. It's also looking at his broader contributions. And, you know, it's problematic to do that.

[00:04:14] **Kendra** It just seems like they stepped out of the frying pan into the fire of their own making.

[00:04:20] **Jaclyn** It's such a wasted opportunity to recognize other authors who are doing amazing things.

[00:04:25] **Kendra** You know, I am happy that they focused on non-English speaking authors because I think oftentimes. . . . I mean, I do know that English language literature dominates the market. I would rather see more books in translation, so that's good. But there's still lots of issues with this.

[00:04:44] **Jaclyn** Still room to grow.

[00:04:45] **Kendra** Definitely. Definitely, that's putting. . . . We're trying to be. . . . Like, we're so polite.

[00:04:49] **Jaclyn** That's the southernness.

[00:04:55] **Kendra** But yeah, there's still only 15 out of 116 winners of the Nobel Prize in literature are women. 15 out of 116. That's not a great percentage.

[00:05:03] **Jaclyn** No way.

[00:05:03] **Kendra** They still have a lot of work to make up. And I guess there's so many people who are amazing writers who deserve the Nobel. So when you go and you pick a writer to celebrate, you're making a statement in and of itself. All right. So the other big thing is the Booker Award winner announcement. And. Oh, my goodness. Jaclyn. So it was announced that Bernadine Evaristo (for GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER) and Margaret Atwood (who wrote THE TESTAMENTS) won the Booker Prize together.

[00:05:37] **Jaclyn** And I didn't realize that this has happened before. I think that there's two other times. And apparently the rules were changed during those occasions to stop this happening again. But here we are.

[00:05:49] **Kendra** So what is really frustrating about this occurrence is that the Booker Prize, unlike the Nobel, is supposed to be about just one book. It's not a career look. It's not how prestigious the author is kind of prize. It is a single book prize, one book against another book. In theory, equally. But I feel like this is kind of a cop-out from the judges because they didn't want to snub Atwood. But, you know, Bernadine is the first black British woman to win the Booker Prize, and she has to share with, you know, well-established white lady—that it's very frustrating.

[00:06:27] **Jaclyn** Yeah. And I have not read either book. So I can't comment on the substance of the books. But from people that have read both, a lot of the commentary that I'm saying is that THE TESTAMENTS is a good book, but not a great book. And that they feel like the recognition she's being given with this prize is largely to do with her career and the culmination of her works as a whole as opposed to being about this book. And I think so many people have just raved about GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER and really praised it for being a stunning book. And it does feel like that the achievement that Evaristo has had as the first black woman to win this prize and with such a fantastic book has been diluted with having to share the prize and having to financially share the prize too. Like, they're splitting that prize money.

[00:07:18] **Kendra** And I believe Grove Atlantic is publishing GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER in the US sometime in the near future.

[00:07:23] **Jaclyn** December.

[00:07:23] **Kendra** December. Okay.

[00:07:25] **Jaclyn** I feel like a really good takeaway from all this is to go buy Bernadine Evaristo's book and read it and talk about it and share it with people. That's a really good way to respond to this, I think.

[00:07:35] **Kendra** So each year for the Reading Women Award, we pick six fiction and six nonfiction books for our shortlist. And those are our favorite books of the year. And then we pick an award winner from each category. But this year, as we've mentioned at the top of the show, we wanted our co-hosts to be able to talk about their favorite books. Now we have forgone some of the detail kind of rules. But as long as it's published in America and is by a woman, anything is up for grabs, which is really exciting because some of the picks that you guys have picked today are ones that I'm so glad I get to see mentioned because they definitely deserve more attention.

[00:08:16] **Sachi** Yeah, I'm really excited about both of my picks. And my first pick is one of those type of genres that we haven't covered in the past. So I'm really excited to highlight that today.

[00:08:27] **Kendra** So first up is our fiction picks. So Sachi, I think you have the first one.

[00:08:32] **Sachi** Yeah. So my first pick today is my fiction title and that is THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT by Misa Sugiura. And just a brief description of this book. This is a YA title, so genre that we typically haven't put in the shortlist before. So I'm really excited to talk about this today. And this follows Chisaki Joan or "CJ" Katsuyama. And she's a 17-year-old Japanese American girl raised by her mom and aunt. And her mom is this really intense kind of career woman that is in this really, really high-powered job. And she really wants CJ to follow in her footsteps and have this really, really big, successful business career. And CJ is really more of just perfectly content with working with her aunt in the family flower shop. So her mom really is pushing her one direction, and she's kind of running more towards her aunt. And the biggest point of contention between these three women is that the flower shop hasn't been doing well over the past couple years and holds a lot of sentimental value because it has been in their family for generations. And so the shop is in danger of being sold to this really wealthy family in their community. And this family has their names plastered all over different types of buildings and all these things. They own this really large business, and they are trying to purchase this shop because of its location. And this is the same family who swindled their way into owning their family's property when CJ's grandparents were sent to a Japanese internment camp in World War II. So it's this really problematic thing of this wealthy family has their wealth based off of this really large food business. (I think it's a food business.) And the farmland that they've cultivated to have this really large business was from a lot of the Japanese people in the community who were sent away and weren't able to negotiate good prices for the land. So the ownership issue really expands farther out in the community, and sides are taken. And secrets get out to the local newspaper and media. CJ finds that she becomes really passionate about this issue of the flower shop potentially being sold. And that really stems kind of into this coming-of-age story for her, to really fight for something that she believes in since she's kind of been impassionate about things in the past. So that's a little bit about the book. I loved this book so much because (A.) while it's not super short, it's it's kind of lengthy. I read this on vacation and flew through it. I think I read it in like two sittings, even though it's a little bit of a heftier book. And even though the plot is a little messy, I didn't even care because I was just so happy to see Japanese American representation where someone finally wrote about the Japanese internment during World War II—and in a contemporary work of fiction. I've only ever seen it in nonfiction, kind of in the historical lens. And I could tell that, you know, the author is Japanese and very passionate about Japanese culture. And when I read the back of the jacket, it said that the author is descended from a Japanese samurai, which was really cool. And I really could relate to that because I found out recently that I also descended from a samurai.

[00:12:11] **Kendra** Oh, that's cool.

[00:12:12] **Sachi** Yeah. My mom, she was talking to my obaachaama, which is Japanese for grandmother. And they had dug up—they were going through my grandma's keepsake boxes. And they found these really old scrolls that had family trees descending back to the Shogun era where we originally descended from this one samurai. So I when I saw that in the book, I was like, this is meant to be. This book is for me. I'm a descendant from samurai too. So. The other really great part about this book is that it really explores a lot of social justice issues and long-term effects of of racism and of internment and highlights a

lot of different topics like white saviorism and abortion and activism and what it means to be an ally and like what true allyship looks like. And the book also has really strong LGBTQ+ representation, which is awesome. There's a lesbian relationship that plays a major role in the plot. I have seen in more contemporary fiction where there are LGBTQ+ characters that are more side characters, and their relationships aren't really fleshed out. But in the very center of the story, there is a relationship that really plays a pivotal part, which I really appreciated. And I just wish this novel would have been around when I was a teenager. So this is great for everyone or anyone who loves diverse contemporary YA or people who want to understand some of the issues that I outlined, such as racism or internment or anything like that. Yeah, I thoroughly enjoyed it. So that title is called **THIS TIME WILL BE DIFFERENT**, and that's by Misa Sugiura. And I think, Jaclyn, you have the next fiction pick.

[00:14:00] **Jaclyn** Thanks, Sachi. So the first book that I wanted to talk about is **THE MUSEUM OF MODERN LOVE** by Heather Rose, and that is out from Algonquin Books here in the US. And it was published in November last year. So I'm just getting in with the parameters of the prize. But this is a really exciting title that I want to share with you all because it's been a very celebrated novel in Australia. It won the 2017 Stella Prize. And for those of you who don't know, the Stella Prize is a very well-publicized and well-celebrated acknowledgement of Australian women writers in fiction and nonfiction. So, yeah, she was the 2017 winner. So when I saw that this was coming out in the US, I was really excited. And I managed to find it as an audiobook as well. So I've read and listened along. So this one has a really different plot, and it's one that I still keep thinking about like months after finishing it. And essentially, it's following a real-life performance that took place at MoMA in New York. And that was the Marina Abramovic "The Artist is Present." And what this essentially involved, if you haven't heard of that before, it was an exhibit where Marina would sit down in the atrium of MoMA. And she'd be at a table, and people were invited to sit opposite her. And for the time that she was sitting there—I think she literally sat there all day for seventy-five days—she would just not react. And she wouldn't give any kind of communication or anything like that with the person that was sitting opposite her. And people could sit for as long or as little as they wanted from what I understand. So within this sort of setting, we're then following several character perspectives, and I guess the central one that we start with and everything else kind of spans off from throughout the novel is Arky. And he's a film composer, and he's recently separated with his wife. And she has given him this last promise that she wants him to fulfill. And we're basically following how he deals with this. And part of this is that he comes across Marina Abramovic at MoMA, and the narrative that follows is really his experience interacting and viewing the art and how he comes to come into contact with different characters and some of the other threads that we hear from this story of people that he's interacted with through this exhibit. And the reason that I wanted to share this with you all is that I just think it's such a fascinating exploration of performance art without necessarily being a book about art. I know that often puts a lot of people off reading books about art. But this one really looks at relationships, whether they be friendships or romantic ones and how these intersect with how different people connect with art, particularly performance art. Another thing that I think is really interesting is we get a real insight into what it means to be part of performance art from the artist's experience. So we hear a lot about Marina Abramovic and this sort of really disturbing insights into some of her performance art. So the pain and physical danger, not so much in the MoMA exhibit that is the focus of this story, but some of her past performance art. I found it fascinating. It's not something that I have a lot of insight into personally. So I really enjoyed learning about it. And I thought it was interesting to try and imagine what that is like from the artist's perspective and the toll that this takes on someone's physical and mental health. So, yeah, I think this is a novel really about

human connections and art and exploring different themes, really big themes like grief and connectedness in life. And I think it's a really exciting and different kind of narrative. And I would love to hear more international readers pick it up. So that was *THE MUSEUM OF MODERN LOVE* by Heather Rose, and it is out in the US from Algonquin Books. And in Australia, you can actually get it via Allen and Unwin. And Sumaiyya, you have the last fiction pick for the honorable mentions.

[00:18:04] **Sumaiyya** So I've selected *TO KEEP THE SUN ALIVE* by Rabeah Ghaffari. Like a five-act tragic play, this book is divided into five sections. It's a family saga, but it's also a narrative that depicts the unraveling of a nation as it goes through revolution. So this novel is set in Iran during the 1979 revolution. That was a turning point in the country's recent history. Iranian society was at a point when the growing religious ideology that favored traditional and conservative life was actually pushing back against the rapid westernization in the country. So there's political tension that is slowly brewing throughout the novel. But the revolution is portrayed as it is experienced by one family. The members of this family are different kinds of people who represent different sides of Iran in a way. So I like to say that this family is like a microcosm of Iranian society. You have the mullah who represents the religious community. You have his nephew who renounces Iranian culture in favor of a Western aesthetic. And you have other people who actually don't necessarily fit within a label or a particular type of lifestyle. And what I mean is like, for example, one of the younger characters is an ambitious and idealistic young man who goes to university. His brother lives in an opium haze. And you have a young girl who wants to become an actress. So holding all these different characters together is Bibi Khanoom, who is the matriarch, whose husband is a retired and respected judge. Many of the scenes in this book take place at the orchard at Bibi Khanoom's house. This is where the family comes together, despite their differences almost every Friday. She is depicted as a strong, older woman who's taking care of so many people. She is generous and loving. And at the same time, she is sensitive to the changes that are happening in Iran. There is definitely a lot to say about this book from its cinematic and theatrical appeal to the beautiful, seamless writing. But I feel like one of the reasons I've nominated this is because, aside from being a critical, post-colonial narrative on displacement and extremism, it actually celebrates life by showing you nearly every side of it. It gives you young love. It shows you love that has stood the test of time and society. There's also grief and loss, mental health, characters who feel alienated. And it also humanizes characters who are outcasts in society. But most of all, the orchard at Bibi-Khanoom's house is like a safe space, a sanctuary. And I feel like our societies today are in need of spaces where people can come together despite their differences. So I would say that everyone should read this book because it's the kind of story that captures life in moments of transition. It takes a look at displacement, culture, being a part of a fracturing society. And I think it's incredibly timely and definitely a book that examines how the clash of ideologies in a society can impact life at every level. And I feel like that is something that our world is going through in so many ways. So that was *TO KEEP THE SUN ALIVE* by Rabeah Ghaffari. And I was the last book that we have selected for the fiction honorable mentions.

[00:21:24] **Kendra** And we'll be back with more from this episode of Reading Women after a word from our sponsor. Now we're onto our nonfiction honorable mentions. And Sachi, you have the first one.

[00:23:19] **Sachi** So my nonfiction title that I'd like to discuss today is *KNOW MY NAME* by Chanel Miller. And while my first pick was very fun and had a balance of kind of teenage drama and a lot of really important issues, this title is a lot more serious and really takes on those issues with a full force. *KNOW MY NAME* is a recent memoir. I believe it came out

only a couple weeks ago by Chanel Miller. And she is also known as Emily Doe and went by Emily Doe during the Stanford rape case against Brock Turner about I think it was five years ago. And while she really remained anonymous throughout the trial, she's now going public with her identity and telling her side the story through this extremely powerful book. For those of you who might not have heard about this case, it became extremely famous after Turner was only sentenced to six months in county jail. Even after Chanel gave a really powerful statement at the sentence hearing and that statement ended up being published in the form of a victim letter on BuzzFeed and immediately went viral with about 18 million views. Chanel was shocked by how much interest this garnered. And even though the jail time for Turner wasn't sufficient, Chanel's letter made a case for California law to change. And the minimum sentence for sexual assault cases got changed. And the judge who gave the lenient sentencing was recalled, or was fired. This novel gives a lot more context to these events and shows her side of this really difficult case where a lot of victim blaming took place and shows the long-term effects of sexual assault on its victims. So I think, wholeheartedly, everyone should read this book. It's powerful. It is infuriating and sad, but extremely hopeful and insightful all at the same time. And I don't say this all the time because I feel like it can be overused or cliched, but this book, in my opinion, needs to be required reading, especially for young males. I know some of the universities, they choose a book that all incoming freshmen have to read. And I feel like it has to be this book. There's so many important passages that I found myself putting book darts in every couple of pages, especially in the latter half after the trial. And she's reflecting on everything that happened and some of the things that snowballed after that as a result. And ultimately, this book boils down to privilege and how there are so many double standards between victims and the defendants of these cases, especially when the defendant is a white male. One of the most eye opening things that I saw when I read this is just the pressure that is put on victims of sexual assault to remember every minuscule thing about the crime, whereas we constantly protect or believe defendants rather than victims. There is an example in the book where she explains that if Brock doesn't remember something, it's because it was such a traumatic thing, and there were so many things happening so quickly, and we should go easy on him. Where when she doesn't remember something, the court is shocked. She didn't remember everything? She must be lying. She must be hiding something. She must be keeping something from us. And we don't give the victims the benefit of the doubt. So I remember reading Emily Doe's victim letter when it went viral on BuzzFeed in 2016. And after getting to know Chanel over these 300+ pages, the letter is even more impactful than the first time I read it with that context. And everyone should read this. If you want to learn more about sexual assault and what it does to victims and how broken our court system is and how infuriating privilege can be, you have to read this. And Chanel is Chinese American. She is half Chinese and half white. And there are a lot of passages too that talk about race and how being even just half Asian really put her at a disadvantage at times when Brock's inherent white privilege kind of comes to play in the case. So as a half-Japanese person, I really related to this and could see myself in her shoes. And it's terrifying. So I just think so passionately about this. I read this in a really short amount of time, and I just want to shove it in the hands of everyone that will listen. And so hopefully people pick it up. That is KNOW MY NAME by Chanel Miller. And Jaclyn, you have our next nonfiction pick.

[00:28:23] **Jaclyn** Thanks, Sachi. So the nonfiction pick that I wanted to share with you all today is THE YELLOW HOUSE by Sarah B. Broom. And that is out from Grove Press here in the US. And it just came out in August this year. So this is a very new release. So this is a memoir that spans about 100 years of the author's family and her family history in New Orleans. And the title house in the story, this yellow house, is actually a house that her mother bought in 1961 in an area that was at the time, a very promising neighborhood,

New Orleans East. So much of the narrative is following both Broom and her family's history, and the different social and career trajectories that they follow, and her and her siblings and their experience in the education system in New Orleans. And all of these people-based histories, if I can phrase it that way, are paralleled against, I guess, the architecture in their lives. So both New Orleans East, very specifically, within the context of New Orleans broader and also their family home, this yellow house that really becomes a really powerful image throughout the whole memoir. And I think it's interesting that it's a house or a home specifically because so much of what she explores thematically in this collection is how people connect to home and what home even means in the context of crumbling social infrastructures and racism and class-based issues and how these can be sort of intergenerational and the legacy of that as you're growing up within a system that feels stacked against you from the beginning. So just on a sentence-by-sentence level, I found the way that Broom wrote this was just incredibly compelling. And I really felt like I wanted to learn everything about her family, like she was sharing so much about all these different issues and her own experience once she left New Orleans as an adult and how she built her career as a writer. Going off to college and working overseas and spending time working for O Magazine, which I found really interesting. So this one's actually currently on the shortlist for the National Book Award, which is really exciting. And I hope that it draws more people to pick it up because it is a fascinating memoir. So I found this exploration of home as a theme really interesting. And I think a lot of people will find it fascinating because it's set in the context of the social history of what's happening in New Orleans at the time. And I feel like you can't write about New Orleans in the time that she's writing about without mentioning Hurricane Katrina. She brings in a lot of imagery with water and actually uses that language instead of using Katrina in the way that a lot of other narratives do. And I just feel like you get a real taste for so many different parts of this very specific region of the US. And alongside that, a very personalized history of how this particular family and this author have experienced life. And as I mentioned, it touches on so many different issues that both Broom and her family have experienced, including things like class and race and what the blurb it quotes as "the seeping rot of inequality and the internalized shame that often follows." And I thought that was a really apt way of describing it. So hence my quoting it rather than trying to paraphrase and come up with something better myself because I just think that completely nails it, really. And yeah, I love that she's called this book **THE YELLOW HOUSE** because it is such a powerful image in the book, you know, very literally in the sense that she describes the physicality of the house. But also figuratively, it becomes such an important metaphor for her family and her family's experience in the world. And, you know, she does this across the lifespan of the house. The house actually gets lost in Katrina, hence the interplay with this imagery around water as well. You know, it being a reflection on home and displacement and so many of these other themes that fade into the memoir. One of the things that the blurb mentions is how mythologized New Orleans is as a city. And I think that this is a memoir that gives a really unique tale of that story from a very different perspective than other books cover. So for that reason alone, I think this is one that so many people are going to enjoy reading and learn so much from and connect with. And I just I can't recommend it highly enough. I think it's brilliant. So that is **THE YELLOW HOUSE** by Sarah M. Broom, and it is out from Grove Press here in the US. And Sumaiyya, you have our last nonfiction honorable mention.

[00:33:19] **Sumaiyya** Yes, so for my nonfiction honorable mention, I've selected **OUR WOMEN ON THE GROUND**, an anthology edited by Zahra Hankir. This was published by Penguin Books, and it was actually a discussion pick for October's theme of cultural dualities. So in this book, nineteen female reporters talk about their challenging experience while covering a variety of issues in the Arab world. Many of them have risked their lives in

order to document and write about the revolutions and the wars, for example, in Syria, in Yemen, in Iraq. And many are also writing about other issues like the refugee crisis, sexual harassment, and also about growing up Arab in the West. So there is a narrative on bi-cultural identity and navigating journalism from that dual perspective. The Middle East is a region that is rapidly changing. And reporters in this book show you how women face unique challenges, but also the advantages that they may have as a result of their gender. So in her essay, "What Normal?" the journalist Hwaida Saad writes about the network of Syrian contacts that she established once war broke out in Syria in 2011. This was all being based in Beirut. So in her essay, we get an understanding of how people, especially men, would be more at ease when opening up to a female journalist. I was actually very intrigued by this because it made me realize that perhaps they're able to speak to her about their perspective because they may not take her seriously or they may not see her as an authority figure the way that they'd see a man. But this actually works to Saad's advantage. And she is able to access voices that most journalists were not able to once communication with Syria became obscure. In *OUR WOMEN ON THE GROUND*, we have nineteen essays. And that's nineteen very powerful, unique, nuanced voices that are giving perspective to a region that has predominantly been talked about from a male perspective, whether it's male journalists covering issues or men being interviewed. What this book shows you is that women have advantages that help them. Women, for example, have access to other women and bases that men do not. And I think the world sees the Middle East from a masculine lens. So there is a definite need for female voices to give a more balanced perspective of the region. Another important impact of this book is how it breaks barriers, and it dismantles stereotypes about women living in the Middle East who are most often portrayed as weak, dependent, and lacking agency. What these narratives show the reader is the bravery, the courage, and the pure strength that women in the Middle East have developed as a result of their circumstances. I must say that this book was overwhelming to read because it shows you how we can become desensitized to violence and brutality. But at the same time, it also shows you how to hope in such a reality, how to keep fighting, and how to become resilient. I am so fascinated by each of the women who shared their stories and the women they wrote about and the introspection that has actually gone into every single experience. Reading this book is likely to change your perspective. So I think everyone needs to read this because no matter who you are, what kind of interests you have in literature in life, there is no way that you understand the Middle East from the perspective of women. So these voices need to be amplified. And the way to do that is by encouraging more people to read *OUR WOMEN ON THE GROUND*. That was *OUR WOMEN ON THE GROUND*, edited by Zahra Hankir, the last nonfiction honorable mention in this episode.

[00:36:59] **Kendra** All right. Thanks to all of our Reading Women co-hosts for a wonderful year and for talking about these books. We greatly appreciate all the hard work they do, and they have done a fabulous job. So if our listeners are looking for more wonderful recommendations, where can they find you all across the internet?

[00:37:16] **Sachi** You can find me on Instagram (@sachireads).

[00:37:20] **Jaclyn** You can find me on Instagram (@sixminutesforme).

[00:37:23] **Sumaiyya** You can find me on Instagram (@sumaiyya.books).

[00:37:25] **Kendra** And you can find me on Instagram and Twitter (@kdwinchester). If you haven't yet, please leave us a review in your podcast app of choice. And thanks to all of you who have already done that. Many thanks to our patrons, whose support makes this

podcast possible. To subscribe to our newsletter or to learn more about becoming one of our patrons, visit us at readingwomenpodcast.com.

[00:37:47] **Sumaiyya** Be sure to join us next time when Kendra and Autumn will announce the Reading Women Award shortlist. In the meantime, you can find Reading Women on Instagram and Twitter (@thereadingwomen). Thanks for listening to Reading Women.