

## Ep. 82 \_ Afrofuturism and Parable of the Sower.mp3

[00:00:09] **Kendra** Hello, I'm Kendra Winchester, here with Sachi Argabright. And this is Reading Women, a podcast inviting you to reclaim half the bookshelf by discussing books written by or about women. And this is episode 82, where we're talking about AFROFUTURISM by Ytasha L. Womack and the PARABLE OF THE SOWER by Octavia E. Butler.

[00:00:29] **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.

[00:00:38] **Kendra** And welcome, Bezi. Welcome back to the podcast.

[00:00:42] **Bezi** Hey, Kendra. Hi, Sachi. I'm so excited to be back on and to talk about my favorite topic, Afrofuturism, yet again.

[00:00:51] **Sachi** Yeah!

[00:00:52] **Kendra** So I think a great place to start with this episode is actually our first discussion pick, AFROFUTURISM, since it does define and talk about what Afrofuturism is. So the full title of that book is AFROFUTURISM: THE WORLD OF BLACK SCI-FI AND FANTASY CULTURE by Ytasha L. Womack, and it's out from Lawrence Hill Press. So we've had a lot of questions about Afrofuturism on the Reading Women Challenge discussion board. And so I think the first question that everyone seems to be asking is "What is Afrofuturism?"

[00:01:25] **Bezi** So Afrofuturism, in short—and as you will soon learn in the rest of the episode, nothing about this is short, but I will try and give a short version—Afrofuturism can be understood as the way that Black people think about and imagine futures that usually involve ideas about science fiction, aliens, post-apocalyptic futures, and fantastic devices and metaphors. So it can incorporate, as the title of this book suggests, science fiction, fantasy, dystopia, and a whole bunch of other subgenres beneath those. But the idea is that it primarily centers Black futures—and Black and African understandings of . . . and mythologies and worldviews.

[00:02:13] **Kendra** Which I really appreciated how Womack started with this definition. And she gave us actually more than one because she was basically saying, "This is a very broad topic. Here are some definitions." And so I really appreciate how on page nine, she expands on the definition given by Ingrid LeFleur. And she says, "Whether through literature, visual arts, music, or grassroots organizing, Afrofuturists redefine culture and notions of Blackness for today and the future." And I appreciated how she mentioned that it wasn't just literature; it was visual arts, music, and other types of things as well.

[00:02:52] **Bezi** Absolutely. So a lot of people know Janelle Monae as very much Afrofuturist and Erykah Badu as very much Afrofuturist. And lots of other visual artists and musical artists move in Afrofuturist spaces and take up these ideas to imagine Black people in the future, which for marginalized people is something that has been fundamentally challenged time and time again through literature, through all of these arts medias, that there will be people of color in the future. There's a lot of mainstream science fiction and fantasy that decides that people of color are just gone, for one reason or another. And so to center Black people—and to not only center them—but say that not

only are they there, but they are present there. They are thriving in the future. And they are fighting new battles, but they are the protagonists in their own stories. It's something that is a uniquely Afrofuturist concept and has been taken up by these amazing authors and writers and artists.

[00:03:57] **Kendra** Yeah. And I really appreciate how, you know, Womack expands upon that idea and talks about some of the resistance that some Afrofuturist artists and writers and things have experienced. She mentions that Octavia Butler one time experienced someone asking her at conference, "Just what does science fiction have to do with Black people?" I'm like, "Why would you ask Octavia Butler that? You're going to get destroyed, honey!" But I think that is just an example of what you were saying, how, you know, when I think about really famous science fiction franchises or books or whatever, they often don't include people of color . . . indigenous or Black people in their stories.

[00:04:42] **Bezi** Right. And the answer, by the way, to that question, I believe, is that Octavia Butler talks about the ways that the idea of marginalization and the ideas of "othering" that have happened in Black history and the ways that particular devices that white narratives have used to "other" Black people are present and become reimagined through science fiction and fantasy as you deal with alien species, as you do with fantastic species.

[00:05:11] **Bezi** And to be clear, though, that the authors and writers and artists who deal with that in the mainstream often will use race as an allegory. For example, there will be a race of fairies that happen to be marginalized. And you're like, okay, well, that's not race because it's still like white fairies vs. the white protagonists. But if we talk about Afrofuturism and you talk about Black fantasy and you talk about Black science fiction, instead of using these sort of fantastic creatures as a metaphor to not talk about race, there is a centralization of how we use these metaphors of aliens and post-apocalypse to understand present social conditions and future social conditions of racism and sexism and the intersections between them.

[00:05:58] **Kendra** Another question we often get in the discussion thread is, "What is the difference between Afrofuturism and Black fantasy?"

[00:06:07] **Bezi** Right. So it's a complicated answer because there are ways that Afrofuturism and Afrofuturist creations, including literature, are fantastic. But they are not fantastic in terms of . . . let me define that . . . fantastic in terms of they use surreal or magical concepts, ideas, and creatures, for example. But they're not quite fantasy because. . . . A good example, actually, is BINTI (which I brought up last episode) in terms of there's space travel, and there are alien creatures. And all of these things are considered fantastic, but they're also very science fiction. And there's a way that these two genres of fantasy and science fiction, even in the Western American mainstream, are very linked together. And there are a lot of scholars, much smarter than I, who have talked about the ways that those two genres play together. I think in Afrofuturism, they play even more closely together.

[00:07:15] **Bezi** But I think that the distinction between Afrofuturism and Black fantasy is Afrofuturist literature thinks about specifically imagining the future—what will be. And there are ways in which Black fantasy still riffs on the tropes of mainstream fantasy, which looks to the past and looks through reimaginings of history and stays there in sort of alternate history senses. So, for example, N. K. Jemisin wrote THE HUNDRED THOUSAND KINGDOMS, which is Black Fantasy because it imagines a world in which there are

castles and monarchies and this sort of very conventional, fantastic world with fantasy genre tropes. But she's putting Black people in the center of it, which is fantasy versus something that is imagining the future, imagining futurity, or imagining alternate timelines that would lead to an alternate future.

[00:08:17] **Sachi** So to take it a step further, too, if we compare—because I think it is very broad, and it can be it can be very complex for people to understand—taking that example of N. K. Jemisin's book that you mentioned and comparing it to something like DREAD NATION, which is also kind of set in the past but is a complete reimagining of the past and what that timeline and world looks like is what kind of makes it Afrofuturism rather than Black fantasy, correct?

[00:08:45] **Bezi** Yeah, I think it is hard because they are both fantasy, and I think they are, but they've both been cataloged as fantasy. But the fantasy's imagining of the past is often almost subconscious because there's ways that the genre of fantasy pulls on these ideas of castles and knights and princesses and stuff. That is very . . . it's specifically evoking a European, medieval past. But it's become so embedded in the genre of fantasy that all of these epic fantasies, no matter how crazy they imagine the world, still pull on these ideas of the medieval castle and knights and whatever. And so there are Black fantasy books—and there are several Black fantasy books that still riff on those ideas of a medieval historical past that fantasy has just sort of embedded within it. And then there's books like DREAD NATION and Afrofuturist alternative history imaginings that look at specific catalogs of Black history, in America or otherwise, and imagine alternate timelines for them that lead to an alternate future.

[00:09:53] **Kendra** It's almost . . . they're like pulling from different traditions in a way.

[00:09:58] **Bezi** Yeah, but that really is the way it comes down to. And Nnedi Okorafor's talks about it in her TEDTalk, which I brought up last episode, that Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism start from a different evolutionary beginning than mainstream Western fantasy and science fiction.

[00:10:17] **Kendra** And I found this discussion really fascinating, especially you sent me Nnedi Okorafor's TEDTalk and looking at that because there's been a big discussion about origins and different things and regarding to how a lot of people here in the West will call anything fantastical "magical realism."

[00:10:37] **Bezi** Yes, exactly.

[00:10:39] **Kendra** And that's not actually what's going on. It's from a totally different heritage and point. I really loved how Namwali Serpell talked about how she used both origins—because we asked her specifically about it. And she said, I use both origins, so I would be okay with this being magical realism. But we talked about other books that were not from a Western magical realism kind of origin. So they weren't. They didn't identify that as magical realism. And how we here in the West need to be aware that different kinds of writing has different origins, and we need to quit slapping our own labels on them because that is very inconsiderate to put it lightly.

[00:11:20] **Bezi** Yeah, I think that's another another good layer to add to the distinction between Afrofuturism and Black fantasy because I think that the idea of fantasy . . . Like the word "fantasy," right? It evokes something that we think, "It's not real." And for a lot of African stories, the mythologies that they're driving on or they're drawing from are real

belief systems. And so the authors often will make a distinction between when they're saying, "Oh, this is entirely . . . uh . . . this is something that I believe is a mythology and that I'm riffing on into a fantastic world." And then it is something that is a belief system that is taken very seriously and is not considered fantasy in the way that the West will sort of dismiss fantasy as, "Oh, it's just, you know, magic or something that's unbelievable, something that's outside of our understanding. And so it can't be real."

[00:12:14] **Kendra** Yeah, I was at a talk with Margaret Wilkerson Sexton for her book *THE REVISIONERS*. And someone asked about magical realism in her book. And she said, Well, I don't consider it magical realism. To me, it's just the uncanny because in my belief system—and belief system of her family and heritage, etc.—that's something that could happen. And she really pushed back against that label of magical realism. And I really appreciated her talking about how, you know, she really was basically encouraging readers to reconsider what they label different things because based on different belief systems. And I think that's definitely something that here in the West, where we're like, no magic or supernatural thing actually exists. So we must call it this. And we don't leave space for people who have belief systems that should be respected and appreciated in that way.

[00:13:05] **Sachi** Absolutely. I feel like that happens a lot in Asian culture as well. Like when I had read like *THE NIGHT TIGER* and *THE ASTONISHING COLOR OF AFTER*, I had seen so many reviews talking about magical realism. And it just . . . in the nature of that a lot of Asian cultures are not based in Christianity, it's usually a lot of them are based off of Buddhism and such . . . like the the concept of spirits and not being able to explain a lot of things, it's a true belief. And even when you come into play with different folklore or mythology in different Asian works, I feel like it's always tagged with fantasy or magical realism. And it's like, no, if I were to talk to my grandmother about this, it would not be fantasy to her. It would be something that is in the realm of possibility based off of her belief system. So I feel like this happens all across the board when you're talking about works from the non-Western lense and is something that us as American readers should always be consciously aware of.

[00:14:10] **Bezi** Yeah, I think that's an absolutely valid point in the ways that non-Western cultures have had to constantly deal with our interactions with the West and interactions with Western canon and literature and art.

[00:14:25] **Kendra** And so I really appreciate the work that Okorafor has done with Africanfuturism and raising awareness for that difference because it does point that out. I remember reading *AKATA WITCH* for the first time. It's YA, so it's a little heavier handed, I think. And so she's actually has different characters talking about that difference, which is really interesting. And I really appreciated how she tackled that on a YA level and was introducing that idea to her readers.

[00:14:55] **Bezi** Right. So I talked about in the last episode, that Africanfuturism is different from Afrofuturism and how Nnedi Okorafor sort of framed it. But again, to sort of recap. Africanfuturism centers African cultures and peoples in the concerns and imaginations of the future and in imaginations of technology in that future. Nnedi Okorafor has been the one of the pioneers—and arguably the pioneer—in defining that as a new space that sort of intersects with what splits off from Afrofuturism. And whereas Afrofuturism does deal with and interact with tropes from the West and the West itself, Nnedi Okorafor has asserted that Africanfuturism is starting from African spaces and African imaginings. So it's

really exciting to see the ways that she has brought that to life and the ways that other authors are also bringing in that as an explicit idea in new and published works.

[00:16:05] **Kendra** Does that go back to the idea of the different origins as well?

[00:16:08] **Bezi** Yeah, I think so. I think that. . . . And again, this is an ongoing discussion. It's also fairly recent that Nnedi Okorafor put this out, put out a definition of Africanfuturism that she is sort of proposing and that other scholars are taking up. That Africanfuturism has a different evolutionary beginning because it's beginning in African mythologies, African cultures, African peoples that are not in the West, that are just not present in the West. And so although it interacts with the diaspora, and obviously African characters can be anywhere in the world, there is a way that African American stories are still interacting with the West and present in the West and, as authors, dealing with tropes from Western fantasy and science fiction that Nnedi Okorafor is saying that Africanfuturism does not do.

[00:17:05] **Kendra** I think that's really fascinating, and it kind of makes me think of Yaa Gyasi's book *HOMEGOING* and how they're the different . . . they're connected in the beginning, but then they separate, and they have their own stories and their own experiences through the generations in that way.

[00:17:22] **Bezi** Yeah, that's a really beautiful way to put it. Yeah, that it's the diaspora. . . . We all started as Black people in Africa. But through the violence of slavery, through immigration—there's a lot of ways—the refugees going to different countries throughout the world. . . . There's ways that Black people are present in cultures worldwide and write stories within their different contexts. And so there is Africanfuturism. But there's also Afrofuturism and the ways that the diaspora find commonalities.

[00:17:58] **Kendra** All right. So that was our first discussion pick: *AFROFUTURISM: THE WORLD OF BLACK SCI-FI AND FANTASY CULTURE* by Ytasha L. Womack, out from Lawrence Hill Press. And we'll be back with more from this episode of Reading Women after a word from our sponsor.

[00:19:48] **Kendra** And Sachi, you have our next discussion pick.

[00:19:51] **Sachi** Yes. So my discussion pick, like we announced our last episode, is *PARABLE OF THE SOWER* by Octavia E. Butler. And this is out by Grand Central Publishing. And we wanted to take a little bit of what we learned from discussing our last pick *AFROFUTURISM* and wanted to highlight how this book, *PARABLE OF THE SOWER*, reflects Afrofuturism, so that way we can kind of apply some of the knowledge that we've learned early on in this episode.

[00:20:19] **Sachi** So for those who might have missed the previous episode about this month's theme, here's a quick recap of the plot. So again, this book is a duology and is set in 2025. And it was originally written in 1993. And it kind of shows a dystopian view of the world and focuses on a young African American woman named Lauren, who is forced out of her neighborhood by drug users who are obsessed with setting and watching fires. So the fires and climate change are a large theme within this book. And as she meets with other refugees on this road north, they look for safety and then start to unravel a new way of thinking that might save the world.

[00:21:03] **Sachi** So one of the biggest ways, at least to me, that this book stands out is how it envisions that a destructive culture . . . and especially focusing on race, like all the

books that we've talked about before . . . how it plays out in the future. And that's kind of the first trigger, hopefully, to most readers that this is Afrofuturism. And I've seen this book compared or in the same discussion as THE HANDMAID'S TALE, especially after we entered kind of Trump-era America. But the one glaring thing I feel like that is ignored in Atwood's vision of the future is race. And I know this has been talked about extensively, especially after the show on Hulu came out as well. But this book obviously fully explores that, as many works of Afrofuturism do, and is one of the things that I loved most about this book and just incorporates so many elements of Black history and culture. And obviously there's parallels to things like slavery and the Underground Railroad and takes a really great look of modernizing that and setting into the future. Even now, it's, as we've said before, very relevant.

[00:22:16] **Bezi** THE HANDMAID'S TALE is one of the books that unfortunately does decide that people of color are just not present in this future. And it's a trope that exists in a lot of different books. But in this particular comparison, it becomes acutely obvious that Octavia Butler is concerned with the ways that not only people of color are present in the future, but have to uniquely navigate that future.

[00:22:43] **Kendra** And I think that's such a great point because what was done in THE HANDMAID'S TALE is take stuff from different people around the world, mostly cultures of women of color, and make them happen to white women. And imagine . . . mixes all things up to all together, obviously. And I feel like that was one of the reasons why I've really struggled with THE HANDMAID'S TALE. I don't . . . I've never really liked it at all because it . . . that's just what it was doing. And so I didn't know what the PARABLE OF THE SOWER was about when I picked it up, and I was like, "Wait! This is like THE HANDMAID'S TALE, but way better! And way more inclusive and just better. And the second book, the PARABLE OF THE TALENTS, is, I think, even better than PARABLE OF THE SOWER. So I really appreciated the more holistic and intersectional look that Octavia Butler has given a lot of these topics in this duology, and it is just so good. She does such an amazing job. And my mouth just hung open when I finished the duology and was like, I will never be the same again. This is so good.

[00:23:51] **Bezi** Yeah.

[00:23:51] **Kendra** So well done.

[00:23:53] **Bezi** And it's just . . . it is an amazing story, and it is a story that also integrates the spirituality and science in really beautiful ways that I think that maybe mainstream readers wouldn't be expecting in science fiction. I know I wasn't really expecting in science fiction because Octavia Butler was one of the first authors that I read in Afrofuturism and in Black sci-fi. But the ways that she brings together a worldview that encompasses both science and spirituality. . . . "Working to make meaning in this life while living among the stars" is sort of a paraphrase of one of the quotes in the book. It's just really beautiful and thoughtful and philosophical and lingers in my mind long after I read the book.

[00:24:38] **Kendra** I really appreciated how she used religion as a metaphor in the book because, like you said, oftentimes in science fiction, in that vein of things where things are scientifically explained or it's like this, you know, end of the world kind of future, that there is no . . . the author leaves no space for religion—unless it's like some like doomsday cult or something. And so what Octavia Butler, does for those who haven't read PARABLE OF THE SOWER, is that the protagonist has this new belief system. Her dad is a pastor. He's a preacher in almost literal end-of-days kind of situation. And so she grew up that way, but

she didn't believe the same way that he did. And so she discovers as she describes her own belief system. And I really appreciate the way that that is taken through and the critiques of Christianity here in America that Octavia Butler also adds because there's, especially in the second book, this vein of extremism about making America great again, which is literally a quote from the book. I can't make this up.

[00:25:47] **Bezi** Written in 1993! Because it's present since the beginning of . . . since the beginning of, honestly, history in America period. But especially, you know, written histories. . . . As long as there was a Constitution and there was a Declaration of Independence, there were those writers writing about . . . like Thomas Jefferson . . . writing about how the greatness of intellectual thought in America came from landed white men. And so the idea of "Make America Great Again" is not new. But the ways that we've articulated it over the centuries, the past couple centuries, have changed and evolved. But Octavia Butler happened to land on the phrasing that would come up again in a very horribly ironic way.

[00:26:34] **Sachi** It's like chilling, seeing screenshots from friends who have read it, and they're like, "Did you know that this is in here?" And I'm just like, it's scary to see it like that on a page when you know that it was written in the early '90s.

[00:26:49] **Kendra** Yeah. Yeah. It's a really insightful book in every way. And the way that she looks at the intersections of women and disability. And one of the things we we don't mention—haven't mentioned yet—is that the protagonist is an empath or someone who experiences pain along with others. And I was looking through the reader discussion in *PARABLE OF THE SOWER* in the Grand Central Edition. And the question was phrased, "The protagonist experiences the delusion that she experiences. . . ." I was like, wait, what?

[00:27:25] **Sachi** What?

[00:27:27] **Bezi** Oh no. Oh no.

[00:27:27] **Sachi** Excuse me.

[00:27:27] **Kendra** Yes! I was like, oh, my word, Publishing. What have you done? And so I thought that was so odd that it basically was pulling the rug out from under the point that I think that Octavia Butler was trying to make in making her an empath and making that an ability that people have in this world, that she, you know, alternative future that she's created. Which is really a very interesting discussion. I mean, if they wanted a great discussion question, maybe they won there. But I always found that particular part very interesting. People with chronic illnesses for a long period of time, their brain gets rewired frequently. And so they experience pain and emotions more intensely than able-bodied people. And so it kind of reminded me of that discussion that the disability community has been having about empathy and what happens when a woman has this ability and whether or not people think that she's crazy or whatever, which is some of the questions that are delved into this book as well.

[00:28:21] **Bezi** And I mean, speaking of publishing, I think—as someone who wants to go into publishing—I know I've done some research on how publishing has interacted with Octavia Butler. And it's been really interesting to learn that for a while, publishing did not know what to do with Octavia Butler. For example, *KINDRED* was first published with a whitewashed cover, as was, by the way, Nnedi Okorafor's . . . I believe it was *BOOK OF*

THE PHOENIX or WHO FEARS DEATH. One of those books was published with the whitewashed cover. And it was really. . . . It's been frustrating to see some of the ways in which authors who are carving out new spaces in fantasy and science fiction have to navigate the sort of genre definitions that publishing has set forward.

[00:29:09] **Bezi** It's also been interesting to note that PARABLE OF THE SOWER has been compared as a blurb to 1984 meets HANDMAID'S TALE, which is not the comparison that I would have made but is now on the front cover of a newer edition of the book. And so yeah, I think that there are conversations that continue to be had and that need to continue to be had about how we talk about these authors who are creating these new spaces and are self-identifying as either Afrofuturist, or they're identifying as Black fantasy or Black Sci-Fi, and letting them identify the way that they need to and the way that they wrote the book to be, even if it makes sort of conventional definitions uncomfortable.

[00:29:57] **Kendra** I think that, you know, it's important that we let groundbreaking authors, I think, like Octavia E. Butler, be the first of who they are. So there's that famous quote about people asking if Simone Biles was the Michael Phelps of gymnasts or something. And she's like, no, I'm like the first Simone Biles.

[00:30:17] **Bezi** Yeah, yeah. That's a great way to put it.

[00:30:21] **Kendra** I think that's the same with Octavia Butler. She's not these two random people. She's the first Octavia Butler. And I think that's so important. And I really appreciate how, in AFROFUTURISM, both Okorafor and Jemisin talk about how important Butler was to their work and how the generations keep going and the importance of that.

[00:30:40] **Bezi** And carving out that new space. Yeah. I mean, comp titles are a thing. Comparison. Ways that people find books in the ways that they can enter a story in the mainstream. And that's very understandable. But we do need to be careful about the power dynamics at play of saying 1984 and HANDMAID'S TALE for a Black author who is doing something very different.

[00:31:02] **Kendra** There's just nothing like Octavia.

[00:31:05] **Bezi** I think so. I'm biased.

[00:31:08] **Sachi** Well, I feel like, too, just based off of reading some of her works, but also seeing in our previous pick, AFROFUTURISM, they talk about kind of the three . . . I think they even say three founders . . . but the three very influential creators of content related to Afrofuturism, seeing her name featured in there. And then just having so many people throughout the book say that she was an inspiration. . . . To compare her to, you know, mainstream white authors that really have nothing to do with this space, like, is crazy to me, especially when she's definitely her own kind of, you know, owner in this space? I just am still baffled by your comment that it was compared as those two things. It's just nothing of the sort. And that's why it's so important that not only publishing, but even just us as readers really educate ourselves on these different aspects of literature and what these new and emerging spaces are and what they look like so we don't make incorrect assumptions or comparisons or anything as we understand and read these pieces of literature.

[00:32:24] **Bezi** Very much agree with that.

[00:32:25] **Kendra** Cosigned.

[00:32:26] **Sachi** Yay!

[00:32:27] **Bezi** Cosigned.

[00:32:30] **Kendra** Yeah. And I really appreciate the intersectionality that Octavia Butler has in both of the books. And she doesn't just paint people with a single brush. There are good people and bad people from all different types, walks of life in the books as well. So it's a very balanced book, I would say.

[00:32:49] **Sachi** It really hits so many different notes. Like obviously we can't give spoilers, but it's so difficult to really emphasize how well rounded and how many layers and complexities this book has. I wish we could dive into some of the intricacies because we could probably talk for hours.

[00:33:11] **Bezi** It's probably for the best so we don't take up everybody's. . . . I could go on for days.

[00:33:16] **Sachi** For everyone's schedules as well. But I think it's. . . . I really hope that people pick both of our picks up, these discussion picks, because there's just so much to learn. I myself have just learned so much about this. And I'm so glad that we were able to do this on my month, selfishly, because it's something that obviously being connected with Bezi through social media over the past, I think, year or two, I've heard about Afrofuturism, and I've learned through your account. But just to read so many books in this period of time first hand and learn more about it. I've just been so thankful for this experience and opportunity and want to definitely continue it in the future.

[00:34:00] **Bezi** Yeah. I'm really happy that I was able to join Reading Women for so many reasons, but also because Afrofuturism and Black fantasy is having a real moment in the mainstream, which hopefully won't be a moment. Hopefully we'll continue. But it started I would say in 2018-ish with the release of BLACK PANTHER, where all the sudden people start asking, "Where's Afrofuturism? Where's Black fantasy? These are all things that exist, and we didn't know about it." And so yeah, it intersected with my coming into bookish spaces like bookstagram. And also my own graduate study started around the same time. And it's been really cool to see how many people are excited about and responding to discussions of this genre, which has existed and has a history, but is also continually evolving and becoming something really new and exciting.

[00:34:57] **Sachi** All right, so that was our second discussion pick, PARABLE OF THE SOWER, by Octavia Butler. And that is out from Grand Central Publishing.

[00:35:06] **Kendra** So to close out our theme of Afrofuturism, Bezi, you have some extra recommendations for people who want to go off and read even more books on the topic.

[00:35:19] **Bezi** Definitely. So also, I would start with the fact that my book Instagram (@beingabookwurm) is primarily focused on Black fantasy, Black sci-fi, and Afrofuturist literature. So at any given point, that's what I'm probably gushing about over there. But some of the other books that we had mentioned in last episode, and that I wanted to bring up. . . . DARK MATTER: READING THE BONES is the sequel to the anthology that I mentioned in the last episode, also edited by Sheree Thomas, but includes newer authors like Nnedi Okorafor, Ibi Zoboi, and Nisi Shawl. And so it's a really cool way if you have

read the first anthology—or if you haven't, and you want to dove in—it brings in some of the more contemporary authors and the ways that they're evolving the genre. Also by Nisi Shawl, EVERFAIR is a book that's out by Tor Books. And it's an alternate history of the African Congo, Europe, and the US during the late 19th and early 20th century, where Shaw's sci-fi turning point is that the native populations of the Congo learned about steam technology earlier. And so it's this like really cool, steampunk world. It centers Black people and centers this new imagining of colonialism. And it's really accessible and exciting to people who love the steampunk genre, subgenre.

[00:36:54] **Kendra** All right. So where can everyone find you guys about the internet?

[00:36:59] **Sachi** You can find me on Instagram (@sachireads).

[00:37:03] **Bezi** And you can find me, as I mentioned (@beingabookwurm). Like I said last episode, "wurm," dragon. Thought I was really cool with that username. And it's on Instagram, and I'm on Twitter as well.

[00:37:18] **Kendra** And you can find me on social media (@kdwinchester). Thanks to both of you guys for coming on and talking about these amazing books. We could gush about them forever, I'm sure. But if you would like to find more discussion about Afrofuturism, check out the link to the challenge page in our show notes. And there is a challenge, the Reading Women Challenge, to read a book on Afrofuturism or Africanfuturism. There's a lot of discussion there. Would recommend. And of course you can find us on social media at our various places.

[00:37:50] **Kendra** So that's our show. If you haven't yet, please give us a review in your podcast app of choice. And thanks to all of you who have already done that. It really does help the algorithm. So if you have reviewed us already, we greatly appreciate it. If you haven't yet and you love us, please do so on whatever app that you use. It gives us a little bump up in the algorithm, which we all need. So of course, 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](http://readingwomenpodcast.com).

[00:38:26] **Sachi** Join us next time where Kendra and Jaclyn will be talking about books around March's theme, which is women in history. In the meantime, you can find Reading Women on Instagram and Twitter (@thereadingwomen). Thanks for listening to Reading Women.