Leaders Who Library Book Club Pick: *Zaitoun: Recipes and Stories from the Palestinian Kitchen* by Yasmin Khan, discussion led by Suzanne Terry

- This is a hobby book (cooking) that can help humanize a topic frequently seen on the news recently. We discussed other hobby books like sewing books by Japanese authors that can help familiarize ourselves with people/cultures we are unfamiliar with. We also discussed how gardening books can help add context to conversations about climate change and help localize global/sensational news stories. We discussed how cooking/food books specifically do a good job of enhancing the idea of coming together because food is about sharing and can promote meeting a wide variety of people.
- Reading this book gave us a better understanding and appreciation of Palestinian people and culture. Some new things we learned included that Palestinian people usually make more food and beverage than is necessary in anticipation of sharing it with others in case someone stops by. We had a broader understanding of how the occupation can dictate their lives – like not having full control of their water supply, electricity, or fishing grounds, and how that can impact their food and diets. One quote we pulled from the book and found interesting was “Our lives are simply not in our control...apart from how we make our food, of course.” This book focused on food as resistance and protest, as well as food as cultural preservation.
- We discussed American’s attitude and culture surrounding our food – most people remarked on the disconnect we have with our food and where it comes from, and the privilege most of us have to be able to access the food we want to eat.
- In conclusion, many of the themes we discussed connected back to being curious about others, connecting over food, being open to learn about new things, and being willing to step outside of your comfort zone. These are all ways to challenge biases and see things as opportunities for growth.

**Division Updates:** presenters, book suggestions, and discussions for future meeting topics will be forthcoming. Suzanne Terry (Vice President/President Elect) and Rhiannon George (Secretary) will be main point people for the Division in the absence of a currently serving President. Anita Crawford (Past President) will act as a backup point person.

Then, we ended our meeting early in order to encourage people to attend the standalone MLA program *Make the Workplace Your Stage.*