

If there was ever a time to read a book that gets you angry as hell, it would be now. Written by Palestinian activist, Ahed Tamimi, and AJ+ journalist, Dena Takruri, *They Called Me A Lionness* is a fascinating, much-needed look into the way Israel treats the hundreds of children they detain every year. Chronicling Tamimi's own experience of how a now-viral slap caused her to be imprisoned illegally by the Israeli military for 8 months, this book sheds a light onto the darkest, grossest parts of Israel's apartheid tactics, and empowers its readers to walk away wanting to do something about it.

Chances are you've already seen pictures of Ahed Tamimi go viral on the internet. If it wasn't for [the slap](#) that went viral and caused her to get arrested just days later, then it's likely for the shots of her standing up to an Israeli soldier ten years ago. This image was given new life this year, when it circled the internet and falsely painted Tamimi as a Ukrainian child, standing up to a Russian soldier. Both images indicate just how long Tamimi has been standing up for her home village of Nabi Saleh, her friends and her family.

Too often we hear about the way Israeli military treats civilians in their own homes, witnessing video after video of men, women, and children being tear gassed and shot at with rubber bullets, skunk water and sometimes even live ammunition. But it's not often enough that we give voices to the people on the receiving end of these arsenals, or let them tell us their full story. We may see small clips on the internet here and there, or listen to sound bites that succinctly tell us how these Palestinian refugees and families feel about being unfairly targeted by a disproportionate military force, but it's a rare opportunity to get to know the people inside these clips.

That's why this memoir is so incredible, because through Takruri's translations and excellent prose we are given insight into Tamimi's most personal experiences, and brought into the lives of her and her community. She takes us into her hometown of Nabi Saleh — one of the few Palestinian villages that remained after Israel's expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 — and educated us on how much it's changed since Israel illegally built a Jewish-only settlement just across the road. Vivid pictures are painted of the struggles this community has suffered, the protests that happen on a weekly basis, and the events that lead up to the infamous slap. After we learn more about the upbringing that helped make her so courageous, readers can easily understand what drives her and so many activists fighting for freedom. And then she takes us with her on a journey that no human should have to endure, all because of a small slap.

A few days after she hit the soldier and it began to make viral waves on the Internet in 2017, Tamimi was arrested in a house raid in the middle of the night, and what she thought was going to be a temporary punishment for an insignificant infraction turned into a grueling, 8 month imprisonment.

In that time, Tamimi was shackled by the legs and arms and forced to sit up on a chair for hours without falling asleep, made to endure freezing waiting rooms and inhumane cell conditions, mocked and sexually harrassed by military officers, and transported illegally to a prison in Israel (prisoners detained in the West Bank are supposed to be kept in detainment facilities there, and

not taken into Israel) in vehicles better suited to dead animals than live humans. These are just a handful of examples of things Tamimi experienced when detained, and examples of what hundreds of other children go through every single day.

For those unaware, Israel wrongly and illegally detains hundreds of children every year (450 were [already detained](#) by this past June), in facilities just like the one Tamimi spent 8 months in. Their sentences can be extended for an indefinite amount of time without clear reasoning, and Palestinians are tried in a harsh, military court while Israeli-Jewish citizens of the state can be tried in civilian court, and given far less grueling treatment. In 2015, Human Rights Watch [interviewed](#) six children, one as young as 11, who were detained by Israel and gave accounts of being choked, beaten, tortured and aggressively interrogated into giving false confessions. These accounts prove that what Ahed Tamimi faced within the confines of these pages are no special circumstance and no rare occurrence, but part of a disgusting pattern of abuses held by a government body that does not see Palestinians as human-beings.

And though reading about Tamimi's experience is almost guaranteed to anger readers, her handling of these situations will inspire them. It's one thing to go through the grueling treatment she describes in her memoir, but it's another to have the mental strength to carry on and keep fighting. To resist the interrogations and remain silent, no matter how much Israeli officers tried to get her to confess or incriminate her family members; to be able to retain comedy and pull a prank on an officer while detained; to perform dabke dances while protesting in the streets, these are the actions of someone who's passion is fueled by the fire of Palestinian resistance. And it's that very same fire she takes from within and uses to ignite the anger of her readers, inspiring them to want to help stop the horrors described within her memoir. Even the darkest of deeds performed in Israel's cockroach infested, inhuman prisons aren't immune from these flames.

Without a doubt, from start to finish, *They Called Me A Lionness* is the perfect example of just how resilient the Palestinian community is. You can take away our springs, build walls through our towns and even wrongly detain our children, but what Tamimi and Takruri make clear is even through all of that, our fire will never be extinguished and will one day spread through-out the world through stories like these.