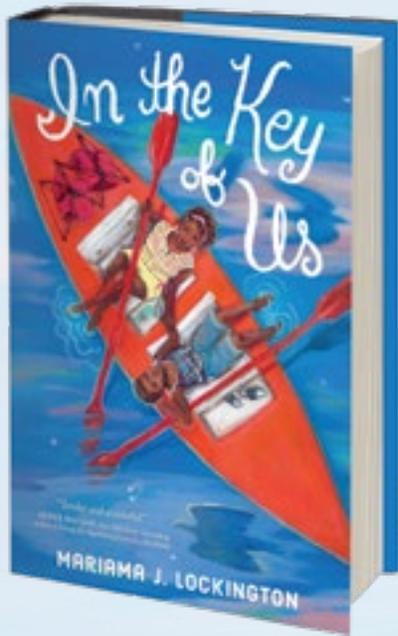


In the Key of Us

DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Thirteen-year-old Andi feels stranded after the loss of her mother, the artist who swept color onto Andi's blank canvas. When she is accepted to a music camp, Andi finds herself struggling to play her trumpet like she used to before her whole world changed. Meanwhile, Zora, a returning camper, is exhausted trying to please her parents, who are determined to make her a flute prodigy, even though she secretly has a dancer's heart.

At Harmony Music Camp, Zora and Andi are the only two Black girls in a sea of mostly white faces. In kayaks and creaky cabins, the two begin to connect, unraveling their loss, insecurities, and hopes for the future. And as they struggle to figure out who they really are, they may just come to realize who they really need: each other.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mariama J. Lockington is an adoptee, writer, and nonprofit educator. She has been telling stories and making her own books since the second grade, when she wore shortalls and flower leggings every day to school. She is the author of *For Black Girls Like Me*, her middle-grade debut, as well as a poetry chapbook *The Lucky Daughter*. Mariama holds a Masters in Education from Lesley University and Masters in Fine Arts in Poetry from San Francisco State University. She lives in Kentucky with her partner and dapple haired dachshund, Henry.



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1. The transition from living with her mother to living with her aunt and uncle has been difficult for Andi. Why do you think that is the case?
2. Andi's memories of her mother are interjected regularly throughout the story. What do these memories convey to the reader about Andi's relationship with her mom?
3. Andi is at first reluctant to socialize at camp, but ultimately she makes friends with Christopher and then with Zora. What do you think attracts her to them? In what ways does each new friend impact Andi's experience at camp?
4. What did you learn in the flashback to the scene in which Aunt Janine stands up for Andi in the principal's office after Andi retaliated against school bullies and was suspended? Why do you think this scene is significant?
5. There are three POV characters in this book—Andi, Zora, and the camp. Why do you think the author chose to include poems from the camp's perspective? What did you learn about the camp from those poems?
6. Zora's mother expects a lot from her daughter, including maintaining a specific diet and securing first chair in band all four weeks of camp. How does Zora handle this pressure?
7. The first-chair violinist, Channing, makes racist comments about Andi and Zora. How would you have responded in this situation if you had been a bystander?
8. When Zora attends a dance class at camp, she feels "in conversation" with the music and her body the same way Andi feels she's "in conversation" with her trumpet. What do you think this means?
9. What is Andi looking for over the course of the book, and how does Zora help her find it? What is Zora looking for, and how does Andi help her find it?
10. Do you think Zora and Andi will remain in each other's lives for very long after the summer ends? Why or why not?

