

Village School Children's Book of the Month

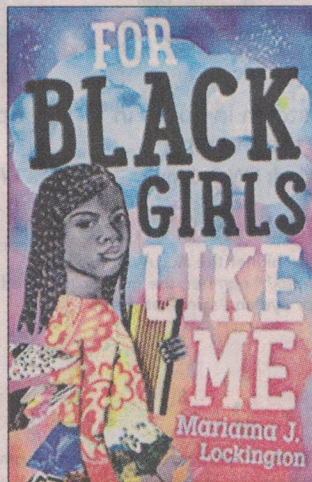
By Rise Richardson, Village
School Director

'For Black Girls Like Me'
by Mariama J. Lockington

Makeda is 11 years old, adopted and black. Her parents and older sister are white. They all love each other, but being black in a white family creates a lot of difficulties. Everyone stares at Makeda wherever the family goes. Adults make well-meaning comments, which always embarrass Makeda. Like all 11-year-olds, she only wants to conform and not stick out. She doesn't want people to notice her as different.

On top of all that, her parents are moving from Maryland to New Mexico, and she is leaving her best friend Lena behind, a bestie who really understands her, and is adopted and black like Makeda.

At her new school, a snarky girl makes a racist comment that humiliates



Makeda, and when her mother finds out, pulls both sisters out of school to join a home school group.

Makeda's mother was once a concert violinist, her father is still a cello player in various symphony orchestras. There is clearly something wrong with Makeda's mother. This book takes in the cross-country move and the

settling-in to the new house. We follow as Makeda and her older sister fear for their mother, protect her and try to save her from herself.

Important Spoiler Alert: about two-thirds through the book, the mother tries to commit suicide. The two sisters find her, call 911, and agonize over why their mother is sick, mentally ill. This may be tough material for readers under the age of 10, which is why I recommend this book for 10- to 14-year-olds.

"For Black Girls Like Me," told from Makeda's point of view, really helps us see and understand Makeda's world. This book is also for all children with unstable parents — you are not alone, you will find solace in how Makeda tries to make sense of her mother's behavior, and how the surrounding adults help Makeda. I enjoyed reading this book, told from Makeda's point of view, it gives adults a window into a child's world.