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# Books Off The Hook

By Davené Swinson

Read any off-the-hook books lately? Well, how about joining Hekima. Hekima, the Swahili word for knowledge, is a book club that reads a novel by African-American authors each month and meets to interpret and discuss the book.

The Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center (BCC) adopted Hekima from the Black Student Movement's Education Committee in 1997. Providing a way for students to connect to literature rooted in their own culture, the program has become more than a book club. Students begin to enjoy reading by focusing on literature about people with whom they can relate. A brief synopsis of each book is provided below.

"Men Cry in the Dark," by Michael Baisden, is the book for September. This novel is about four friends who grew up poor on the south side of Chicago and how they became successful entrepreneurs. The story focuses on their friendship and the many relationships that they have with the women in their lives. Some of the issues that this book addresses are fatherhood, interracial dating and the older man-younger woman syndrome.

"In the Meantime: Finding Yourself and the Love You Want," by Iyanla Vanzant, will be the book for October. Several people wonder what is the "meantime" and how to get through it. This novel

focuses on how to use the meantime to prepare yourself for your true love. Vanzant's first step is to clean house, starting with the basement. According to this inspirational speaker, one will be ready to accept love into their house after spring cleaning room by room.

"B-Boy Blues," by James Earl Hardy, is the daring novel for November. This book focuses on the homosexual escapades of Mitchell Crawford. Mitchell is a young, Black, educated and gay man who has flings with two B-boys, as he calls them, until he meets the man of his dreams. In this book Hardy reveals what happens when two cultures collide.

"When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost," by Joan Morgan, is the book for December and January. This book takes an interesting look at the contradictions in being a strong woman and an African-American sister looking at the hip-hop world. Her book searches for the truth with a series of essays ranging from social issues like the misogyny of rap music, the stereotype of the strong Black woman and the epidemic of single motherhood in the Black community.

"Temple of My Familiar," by Alice Walker, will be the book for February. This book is filled with the unique combination of magic and reality. Focusing on people who are tormented by the world's contradictions, this novel tells the

tale of three pairs of lovers who transcend time to discover the truth.

"Soul on Ice," by Eldridge Cleaver, will be the book for March. This book is the prison memoirs of Black Panther activist, Eldridge Cleaver, that changed the way America looked at the Black experience and the Civil Rights Movement. In one part of the book, Cleaver says, "I'm perfectly aware that I'm in prison, that I'm a Negro, that I've been a rapist, and that I have a Higher Uneducation."

"Cheaters," by Eric Jerome Dickey, will be the book for April. This novel looks at the single scene in Los Angeles. The main story deals with an affair between Stephan Mitchell, who's only interested in a good time, and Chanté Marie Ellis, who's decided to start dogging the dogs. Stephan's friend, Darnell, is tempted to adultery by Chanté's understanding friend Tammy. This novel will definitely keep you guessing.

If any of the books appeal to your reading likes, then come out to the Hekima meetings on the last Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the BCC ready to discuss.

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