

Books Off the Hook

By Davené Swinson

Ever wonder what goes on in a man's mind when he is involved in a relationship? Well, Michael Baisden's "Men Cry in the Dark" gives you all the details in this novel about four successful black men and their relationships.

Derrick, the main character, is a happily single man who just quit his \$70,000-a-year job to start his own magazine. While promoting his new magazine "Happily Single," he meets Angela, the woman of his dreams. He ends up unhappily single by the end of the novel, however, after their relationship takes a detour.

Derrick befriends three equally successful men: Tony, Ben and Mark. They each have problems of their own dealing with the women in their lives, and Baisden uses their friendship to explore the connection that these men have.

A former ladies' man, Tony, has two women in his life, his fiancée and his eight-year-old daughter. While preparing for his first wedding, he also struggles with a little "baby's mama drama." His old girlfriend holds their daughter for ransom, tries to make Tony miss child visits and associates with some unappealing characters.

Benjamin, or Big Ben as he is affectionately known, starts off in the novel as a bachelor like Derrick. However, unlike his friend, Ben never learns to date women his own age, maintaining his strong desire for "sweet young thangs." Finally, he has a confrontation with one such girl that teaches him a valuable, life-long lesson.

And last, but not least, there's Mark. Mark grew up being teased for his speech impediment by the black girls at his school. Because of this taunting, he stopped dating black women in high school and is currently involved with a white woman named Christie. As a couple, they face the prejudice of friends, family and strangers.

While the book does give the reader a few things to contemplate, it fails to create a full picture as to what each character really thinks and feels in certain situations. Another complaint that some people have is that the characters are not developed enough.

Overall, Baisden does a good job of creating an interesting read and portraying these different relationships from the male perspective. The book's clear language and exciting narrative drew the interest, and sometimes critique, of everyone in Hekima.

