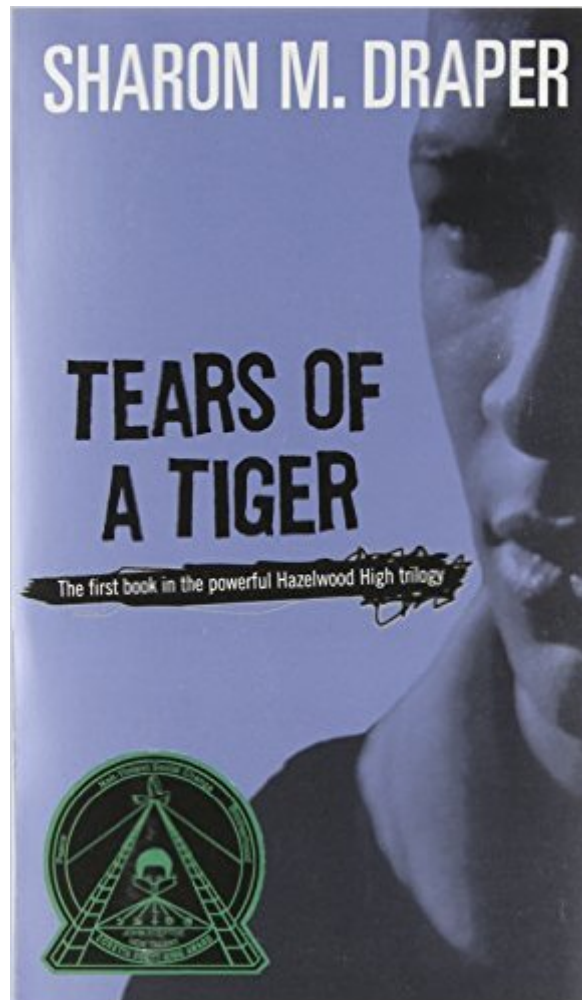


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# Tears Of A Tiger



## Synopsis

When Gerald was a child he was fascinated by fire. But fire is dangerous and powerful, and tragedy strikes. His substance-addicted mother is taken from him. Then he loses the loving generosity of a favorite aunt. A brutal stepfather with a flaming temper and an evil secret makes his life miserable. The one bright light in Gerald's life is his little half sister, Angel, whom he struggles to protect from her father, Jordan Sparks, who abuses her, and from their mother, whose irresponsible behavior forces Gerald to work hard to keep the family together. As a teenager, Gerald finds success as a member of the Hazelwood Tigers basketball team, while Angel develops her talents as a dancer. Trouble still haunts them, however, and Gerald learns, painfully, that young friends can die and old enemies must be faced. In the end he must stand up to his stepfather alone in a blazing confrontation. Sharon M. Draper has interwoven characters and events from her previous novel, *Tears of a Tiger*, in this unflinchingly realistic portrayal of poverty and child abuse. It is an inspiring story of a young man who rises above the tragic circumstances of his life by drawing on the love and strength of family and friends.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 700L (What's this?)

Series: Hazelwood High Trilogy (Book 1)

Mass Market Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Simon Pulse; Reprint edition (February 1, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689806981

ISBN-13: 978-0689806988

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.6 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (441 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #18,691 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Drugs](#) #7 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Drugs & Alcohol Abuse](#) #8 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Suicide](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

As a junior high school English teacher, I am always on the lookout for a good YA novel to teach to my students or to recommend that they read individually. When I heard of *Tears of a Tiger*, I had high hopes that it would be everything that I look for in a YA novel. First of all, I liked the fact that the main characters were African-American. I teach a large portion of African-American students, and I have a lot of trouble finding a YA novel in which African-Americans are the central characters (are you listening, YA authors?). Second, I absolutely loved the differing points of view style that the book is written in. The way that the characters are developed through conversation, letters, poems, essays, and so on is one of the best that I have read. This is a great teaching tool alone, not to mention a super way of telling the story. Third, the event that is the catalyst for the plot, the underage drinking and driving, is realistic and teaches a great lesson to teenagers. Given my glowing praise, you may wonder, why not five stars? The simple fact is that Andy's suicide destroyed the book for me. The whole plot of the book seemed to be leading to Andy's coming to grips with the death of his friend. I was thinking: what a great way to show kids that there are other alternatives than killing oneself to work through problems. Then, the suicide note and he is dead. This is not a good message to send to youth. While a mature young adult can read and understand this book the way that the author probably meant it to be read, this is not a YA book for the masses. In good conscience, I cannot teach a book to kids who have enough disturbing messages thrown at them from all sources on a daily basis as it is.

*Tears of a Tiger* Book Review Happy-go-lucky teenage boys, play basketball and party; figure out how fast all that can change. Andrew (also known as Andy) Jackson, a basketball player who has his license, and his girlfriend Keisha, have been going steady for a few months. Andy's friends Robbie Washington, B.J. Carson, and Tyrone Mills, all go to the Hazelwood High School together, and have been friends for years. Robbie, Tyrone and Andy are party animals, while B.J. is more down-to-earth and passive. One night the boys decide to get a six-pack and have one of their usual "late-night rituals" together. Andy is the driver and has been drinking, and Robbie has his feet up, dangerously on the dashboard. Carelessly drunk and still driving, the boys head out on the highway, where later they hit a wall and helplessly watch Robbie burn to death in the car. There was nothing the boys could do to get him out of the car, but Andy still blames himself, because he was driving. Andy goes deeper, and deeper into depression, and loses his girlfriend Keisha through his anger and crying. He even sees a counselor, and his friends think he is fine. All that smile and charm is hidden behind a crying mask, and his friends can't reach out to help him. But even a counselor couldn't help his friends through the tragedy they were going to face....in the future. Sharon M.

Draper has put together many books like this one, to help young adults through problems that they will face, in their teen years. The book, she hopes, will teach young readers to deal with their problems and to stay away from drugs, alcohol, and suicide. This book is a mix of drama, action, and slight horror.

Well, since the spoiler is out (yes, this and other reviews contain SPOILER ALERTS), I feel free to debate the points made about Andy's suicide in this novel by another reviewer, especially for the sake of others who are considering teaching this novel to their classes. I've never been one to shy away from teaching content because a character makes poor choices--when literature of merit contains high-stakes choices and consequences, then it is a highly teachable moment. Sharon Draper does an excellent job in supporting those moments. First, it is not accurate, as another review implied, that Andy's suicide is the resolution of the story and therefore, a poor lesson or example for young readers; Andy's death is actually the climax of the novel with the fallout and resolution to follow. During the falling action of the novel, the consequences of Andy's death--specifically, its impact on his friends and family--is clearly articulated. Gerald's anger and disappointment in his friend for having taken the coward's way out, and Rhonda's graphic (though age-appropriate) account of discovering the aftermath of Andy's suicide were each among the most poignant of the reactions to Andy's death, which my students and I discussed in depth. Similarly, we would disagree with the statement that all of the rising action pointed to Andy's eventual coming to grips with his responsibility for his friend's death. My students, though hopeful for Andy's sake, debated the implications of his suicidal thoughts and increasingly erratic behavior--including how it pointed to his devolving state of mind and the possibility of his eventual suicide--during the rising action of the novel.

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