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Spark by Rachel Crow

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This enthralling book is set in modern times where people have no experience of out-of-world experiences, except for a few people like 17 year-old Evie and her best friend, Kitty.

Evie's mother has recently died and the teenager is living with her aunt. Although Evie has found it difficult to socialise with people since the tragedy, she is looking forward to Kitty coming home from her overseas school.

Evie's world turns upside-down when she finds out she is included in a project that began long before she was born. Decades ago, an organisation called Affinity altered some people's DNA with a synthetic gene known as Optimal. Originally, Affinity's goal was to make an army that was stronger, faster, and could heal quickly. When Affinity made a mistake in the DNA, they had a problem. Their project went wrong and the people in their army named 'Strikers' became dangerous and were reclassified as 'Strays'.

Other people in Affinity's projects were called 'Sparks' and 'Shields'. When a Stray and a Shield react to one person, usually by skin contact, the person that triggered them is called a Spark. The Stray's goal is to kill the Spark, whilst the Shield's job is to protect the Spark from the Stray.

Evie becomes a Shield to her best friend, Kitty. Together, they have to figure out who is the Stray trying to kill Kitty. Jamie, Kitty's brother, falls in love with Evie, and she with him. Jamie and his family all know about the Affinity project, Jamie being a Shield himself. They start to train together, and find that when they are close, they are both stronger and smarter, even more than before.

The characters are believable and teens could relate to the romance in the book, as well as the school kids, bullies, and popular kids.

Reviewed by Year 8 student, Hayley Tanner

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