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Shield by Rachael Crow

Publisher: Walker Books

RRP \$21.99

The final novel in the *Spark* trilogy is an intense, intelligent plot that will please young adult readers who like a challenging book to stretch their minds. Reading or re-reading the first two titles, *Spark* and *Stray*, will set the scene for maximum effect of this gripping story.

The author's descriptive flair electrifies the drama with vivid imagery and fast-paced action. Complex scientific detail is woven into the narrative which helps to validate the genetically-altered nature of the main characters.

Evie is a highly-charged, lethal product of the Affinity Project. The project is an experiment that has produced super-aware young people who are instinctively activated by Sparks and become Shields for other teenagers to protect them from the killer drive of Strikers or Strays.

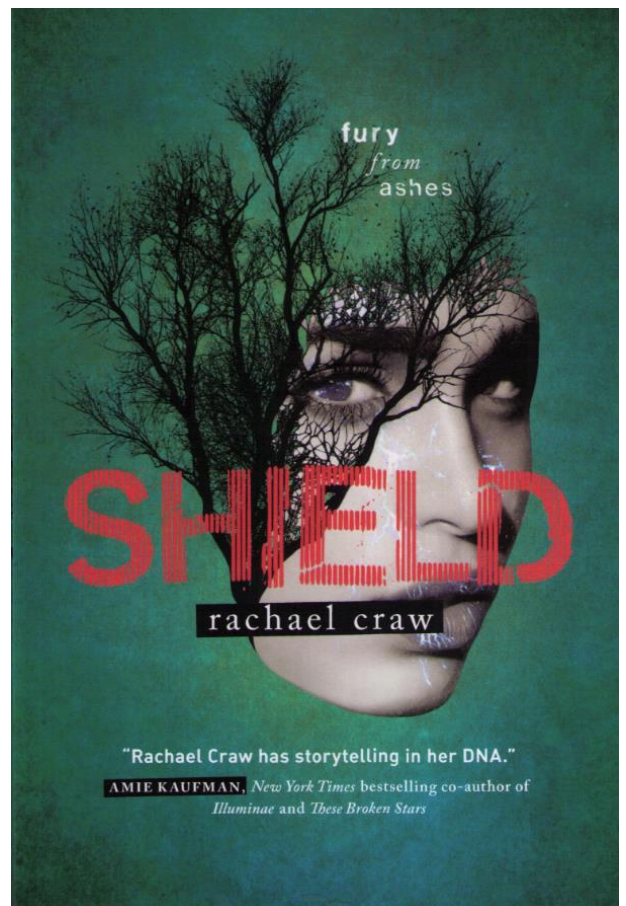
Evie has a Synergist connection with Jamie, compounded by the bond they've shared since childhood. Together, Evie and Jamie are a powerful force that could change the future of the Project. Yet their growing love for each other is threatened by what they're ordered to do against their will.

Several strong characters interact with the Synergist pair and add depth to the dramatic plot. As the chapters unfold, the story crackles with energy and excitement. The build-up to the finale is a blast of full-on action overlaid with surreal telepathic power. Visual writing that takes the breath away.

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Reviewed by children's book author, Jean



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Bennett