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A Kind of Spark

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Editor's Choice:

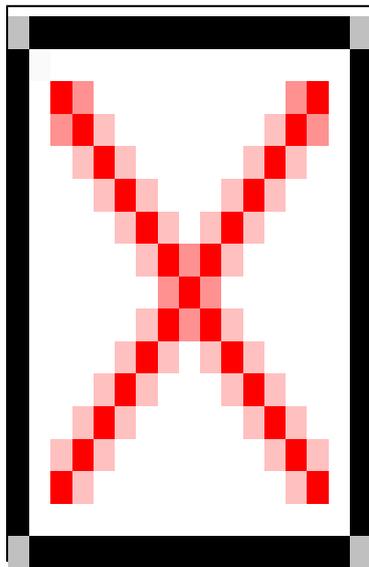
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4



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Addie lives with her family in a small village near Edinburgh. She finds school life hard to navigate because she is autistic and even harder when her one friend seems to reject her. Fortunately, her family understand her needs, particularly big sister Keedie who is autistic too and knows exactly what Addie is going through and how to help her. Addie is captivated by learning; the library is a sanctuary and she has an obsession. When the new class topic on witches is introduced Addie's obsession switches too, she soaks up information about witches and is appalled to discover so many were tried and executed for perceived witchcraft in her village with no acknowledgement or form of memorial. She feels the injustice passionately, her affinity with their cause informed by her own experience and resolves to do something about it.

Narrated from Addie's perspective, we gain an insight into her perceptions of the world and others' reactions to her. Addie has a great deal of understanding of her own needs and how to cope in a neurotypical world which often means masking her responses, where she doesn't understand big sister Keedie, who we find is still struggling herself, is there to explain. Scenes describing Addie's experience of bullying at school bring home the reality of life as an autistic child but also acknowledge the motivation of the chief culprit too.

Addie is an appealing character and readers will be on her side as she fights the blinkered stubbornness of local bureaucracy to achieve her aim of a memorial to village women tried for witchcraft with the help of her family and new best friend Audrey.

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