

[Free download] File size: 35.Mb

# Sparkle: A Novel (English Edition)



*Par Denene Millner, Howard Rosenman,  
Joel Schumacher, Mara Brock Akil  
ePub | \*DOC | audiobook | ebooks |  
Download PDF*

Dtails sur le produit Publi le: 2012-08-07  
Sorti le: 2012-08-07  
Format: Ebook  
Kindle

[Free download] Sparkle: A Novel  
(English Edition)

**Par Denene Millner, Howard Rosenman,  
Joel Schumacher, Mara Brock Akil :**  
**Sparkle: A Novel (English Edition)** before  
purchasing it in order to gage whether or not  
it would be worth my time, and all praised  
Sparkle: A Novel (English Edition):

Download

Read Online

## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur  
**THEY HAD A DREAM. SHE HAD IT ALL.** Detroit, 1968. The Motown sound is sweeping the nation. Girl groups are hotter than ever. Over their mothers objections, three beautiful sisters Delores, Sister and Sparkle are taking the local music scene by storm. But their dreams are bigger than Detroit. Their manager, Stix, is just as ambitious and will do whatever it takes to make it to the big time, even if it means using the girls and his love for Sparkle as the foundation of a new musical empire. Behind the music and lights, the recording industry is a ruthless and unforgiving place, just as Mama had warned her girls. Sister, with her good looks and voice, is the natural headliner of the trio, yet her complicated personal

life threatens to overshadow her talent; Delores has her sights set on a different kind of life outside the spotlight; and young Sparkle must push past her deepest fears if she is to fulfill her destiny. Does she really have what it takes to go all the way? Riveting and soul-stirring, this timeless tale reminds us of the unbreakable bonds between family, the high price of fame and what can happen when we dare to show the world how brightly we can sparkle.

CHAPTER 1 SISTER WAS NEVER good at disguising what she was thinking. Not that she wanted to anyway. The way she narrowed her eyes, the way she twisted her lips, the placement of her hands, the shifting of her lithe, hourglass frame—all of it was her very deliberate way of letting anyone with eyes, ears and a half a brain cell know exactly what was on her mind. And right then, at that very moment, as she stood, hand on hip, in the kitchen of the Discovery Club, alternately glaring at the singer on the cramped, dilapidated stage and the audience's enthusiastic response to him, Sister's stance was screaming three things: Troll! Damn, he can sing! You couldn't pay me to go out on that stage after him!

Sparkle was fluent in Sister-speak. She knew that she'd have to do some fast talking if she was going to get her big sister to walk out on that stage and perform behind Black, a big, greasy, sweaty mess of a man with a voice and stage presence that made him practically morph into Marvin Gaye before the audience's eyes. Sister craved attention and fancied herself the star. Playing musical cleanup was not an option. Sparkle's eyes shifted between Sister's glower and the stage, where, at that very moment, Black was whipping his hand in the air to signal the piano, bass and harmonica musicians to stop playing his soul-stirring blues tune. Black caressed the microphone between his fat, sweaty palms, closed his eyes, cocked his head and stood silent—a dramatic pause that suspended space and time and left the packed crowd hanging so hard on his next note that even the roaches crawling over the crusty dishes back in the kitchen stood still. And just when the room was about to burst waiting to see what the theatrical singer would do next, just when the piano man's arms, suspended over his instrument's keys, started to ache, just when Sister shifted onto her other hip and furrowed her brow so hard her forehead yawned just a bit on her forehead, Black let go of the microphone on the stand, raised his hands in exaltation and, with a growl that rose from the depths of his belly, belted, *Im a maaaaaaan!* the hook to the soul-stirring, make-em-scream-hallelujah a capella version of Bo Diddley's smoky blues song.

Everybody—the musicians, the drug dealers sitting in the choice seats, the young guys cozying up to their dates with dreams of getting lucky later on, the shop workers and hairdressers and school cleaners who'd climbed out of their work clothes and into their finest outfits to enjoy what little bit of fun and freedom they could muster in the bowels of the club, the bartender, the waitress—everybody jumped to their feet and hollered like they were sitting on the front pew testifying at the holiest of church revivals. And Black? He grilled it up and ate it whole. Every. Single. Morsel. Sparkle knew it was time for some fast talking, or she was going to lose Sister. Sister, please, just hold on, now . . . Sparkle began. But Sister was having none of it. No, she said simply, hand still on hip, eyes still on Black. But you're up next! I can't change the run of the show and if you don't go after him, you're not going to get to go at all, Sparkle reasoned. I said no, Sister snapped. I am not going on after a troll who just sang himself cute. Sparkle adjusted her angle so that she was standing in front of Sister, blocking her view of Black and the audience, which by now was shouting and clapping and testifying so hard the clapboard floors and crumbling wall plaster rumbled. Pretty please?

Sparkle begged, turning on her modest-little-sister charm. I don't even know why I let you talk me into coming down here, Sister said, her eyes shifting from one young face to the next. The room was full of younguns—their naiveté practically dripping from their pores. At twenty-eight years old, with enough living under her belt to outmatch most fifty-year-olds, Sister had neither the time, the energy, nor the foolishness it would take to win over a bunch of teenagers anyway. I think I'm the oldest sardine in this can. You don't look it, Sparkle quickly opined. That's the truth, Sister said slyly, flipping her hair and running her hands along the outlines of her hip-hugging satin pencil skirt and her tight black sweater with a scoop cut in the back. Sister looked good. And she knew it, for sure. It's your song anyway. You go out there and sing it. But you're the singer in our family, Sparkle said, anxiously peeking over her shoulder and saying a silent prayer that Black keep milking the crowd long enough for her to con Sister onto the stage. So? Sister snapped. You can sing, too. Yeah, Sparkle said, moving herself into her sister's line of vision. But you know how to keep people's attention . . . Just as the words pushed themselves from Sparkle's lips, both she and Sister caught sight of him—some goofy guy with Coke-bottle glasses and an awkward grin, staring down Sister. See? Sparkle said quickly. People want to see you talk. Imagine how you'll blow them away when you sing. Come on, Sister, just say you'll do it . . . Just then, Black sat on top of his final note, stretching it so far and so long and so wide the audience's thunderous applause was near deafening. When he finally let go of the note, he stood there in his black jumpsuit, a wash rag in his hand, mopping his brow and taking in every praise like it was a

steak dinner. The announcer rushed to the stage, he, too, applauding wildly, and patted Black on the back while he expertly snatched the mic from the singer. Black, ladies and gentlemen, the announcer said. Well keep the applause going. Next up . . . Sparkles heart skipped two beats. Please, she begged Sister. She was racing against time. I just want to hear my song. The announcer kept on: Sister Anderson! This is her first time at the Discovery Club, so make her feel welcome! Sparkle looked at the announcer, then back at Sister.

She was starting to panic. Please, I begged the owner to let you come sing tonight and he squeezed us in even though he really didnt want to. If you back out now, no one will ever hear my song and no one can sing it like you can. Now, I went over everything with the band, and . . . Just then, all 300-plus pounds of sweaty Black rolled their way to the backstage area, crowding out all those who stood waiting their turn to take the stage. He practically pushed Sparkle out of the way to step right in front of Sister; his hot breath seared the rouge Sister had swiped from the makeup case her mother had buried in the bathroom linen closet. Black stared Sister down as the announcer called her name once again. You sure you want to do this? he asked, a smug smile stretching across his face. Sister couldnt stand smug bastards, but what she adored more than anything was a challenge. There was no way she was going to step back off this bet. Sister smiled back at Black, locked eyes with him, and, without saying a word, slipped her arms out of her sweater and spun it around so that the low cut was in the front, where there was now lots of cleavage. Sister, her eyes digging straight down into Blacks soul, said everything that needed to be said between the two. Sisters smirk put the exclamation point on it. Black swallowed hard and shifted his girth out of Sisters way as she stepped past him and sashayed onto the stage. And when she pulled the microphone close to her hot red lips, looked out over the packed crowd and said thank you for the opportunity to perform, there wasnt an eye in the house focused on anything other than Tammy Sister Anderson. Women crossed their legs and twisted a little in their seats and, out of the corner of their eyes, took stock of their mens reaction to the siren on the stage. The menwell, there were quite a few who turned up the bottoms of their cups of liquor and took long, hard swigs of their beer. Those who really didnt give a damn what their women thought of their actions or figured they had plenty of time to sweet-talk their ladies after disrespecting them made no bones about leaning in and running their eyes from the top of Sisters fine brown hair, across her ample bosom, past her invitingly curvy hips and thick, luscious legs and all the way down to the tips of the red toenails peeking from her high-heeled sandals. Sister was sexy. She knew it. And everybody else in the room knew it, too. Sister winked at

Sparkle as the band played the introduction to Yes I Do, an upbeat, Motown-styled song Sparkle had scribbled in her dream journal just a few weekends earlier while she was keeping time with Mama at the dress shop. The words were sugary sweet and innocent, like the yarns of lace fabric Sparkles mother expertly worked into a bridal gown for a teenage girl who was going to be walking down the aisle just a week shy of her twentieth birthday. Sparkle had seen the light in the young bride-to-bes eyes and melted just a little; here was this nineteen-year-old girl, barely out of high school, about to recite her marital vows with a real man, when Sparkle, who was the same age, hadnt even gotten her first kiss. And when that bride-to-be stepped in front of the mirror to admire herself in her wedding dress, Sparkle thought she was the luckiest girl in the world and that, surely, if a man kissed her and told her he loved her and asked her for his hand in marriage, she wouldnt hesitate to say, Yes, I do. In Sisters hands, though, the sweetness of the song took on a wholly different meaning. As she stood on that stage gyrating her hips and pouting through the words and running her hands through her hair and up and down her curves, Yes, I do was way less sweet, innocent bride-to-be.

All rightwe got that part down, Sister yelled into the mic as she pushed it back into the mic stand and smashed her hands together. Now give me a soul clap! Sparkle could have jumped out of her skin. A soul clap? In the middle of the first verse? The audience had barely heard the song and Sister was encouraging them to stomp all over the words and the melody and her voice with a bunch of maniacal clapping?

Horrified, Sparkle balled her fist as she waited for Sister to give her even the tiniest of glances; she was intent on giving her the stop messing with my song death eyeuntil, that is, she heard the audience cheer and fall right in line with the soul clap. Dont lose my beat. I need my beat, Sister demanded, leaning into the mic with a wry smile. She stalked the stage, her eyes sweeping every inch of the room, connecting with every gaze that met her own. Thats it, she purred. And just when the crowd jumped to its feet and Sister was sure shed won them over, she jumped back into the song. The added touch with her vocals instantly picked up the energy in the song and the vibe in the roomso much so that even Sparkle couldnt deny that Sisters funkier version of her sweet song was where it was at. Sparkle joined in the soul clap as she checked out the crowd; her eyes locked in on one particular manmuscular, chocolate, beautifulwho, in the middle of the frenzy her sister had stirred up, was watching her watch the crowd. He smiled and nodded at Sparkle; Sparkle dropped

her eyes and smiled back. But by the time she got the nerve to look at the handsome man again, he was gone. Confused, Sparkle turned her attention back to the stage; the crowd was cheering more! as Sister took her bows and the announcer made his way to the mic. Of course, he nearly tripped over his own feet as he focused not on where he was going, but on Sisters tight skirt. Sister looked over at Sparkle and gave her a wink. Give it up for Sister Anderson, he said to her butt, rather than the audience. Sister played right into it, striking a model pose that made the crowd cheer harder. Sparkle shook her head; Sister winked at her and shifted her attention to Black, who was standing next to her in the wings of the stage. Sparkle stole a quick glance and was surprised to see the handsome man whod been eyeing her standing practically next to her, chatting up Black. She leaned in just a little to eavesdrop on their conversation. So what do you think, Mr. Manager, we gonna do some business? Black asked. The man looked at Blacks face, quickly shifted down to his belly, and then back up to his face. You got to lose some weight, he said, before turning his attention back to the stage, where the announcer, still staring at Sisters behind, apologized profusely for being so crass as to stare at a ladys posterior. Even with the apology, though, he was still looking. My belly helps me sing, Black insisted, trying to keep the mans attention. Look, TVs are getting bigger and clothes are getting smaller, he said matter-of-factly. You were made for radio. Man, you cold, Black said. Sparkle tried hard to contain her giggle. That was cold. Sister stepped off the stage just as the announcer invited up a drummer from Harlem who was next to perform; she made a point of standing directly in front of Black, that same wry smile shed given him before she took the stage sitting on her lips. Black smiled back and bowed his head, as if he were addressing the Queen of England. Feminine . . . Black began, his eyes slowing panning down to Sisters cleavage, um, charm. Mandatory group participation. Nice touches. See you next week? Though shed clearly made the audience that loved him eat right out of the palm of her hand, Black made sure she knew that their unspoken rivalry wasnt over. Not even by a stretch. Maybe, Sister shrugged. Maybe not. Sparkle inserted herself between the two and hugged her sister hard. You were great! she said. But we have to go. We have five minutes to catch the last bus. Sparkle pushed Sisters jacket into her chest and grabbed her arm. But her stride was broken by the handsome gentleman, who now was focused solely on Sister. Excuse me, he said confidently. Sister dismissed him with a quickness. I dont date younger men. No, Im not . . . the man began. Sparkle heaved a heavy sigh. And here she was thinking the cute guy was angling for her. As usual, the moment they caught a gander of Sister, all chances of Sparkle getting the attention quickly disappeared. Im sorry, she said, grabbing her sisters hand, but we have to go. The man watched intently as the sisters headed out of the club. He looked back up to find Black smiling at him. Bird in a hand, Black laughed. The man stood silently. So, whatd you say your name was again, Mr. Manager? So I can be sure to look you up when I get big time? Big time, huh? the man said, staring at Blacks belly again and then back at the door through which the two women had disappeared. Yeah, youre gonna get big all right. Im Jeremiah Warren, but my people call me Stix. \* \* \* Sparkle paced back and forth in front of the tiny bus-stop bench, alternately looking at her watch and down the street. She said a silent prayer that the two hadnt missed the last bus home; they didnt have money for a cab and if they had to walk in their fancy shoes, they wouldnt make it home until the sun found its way to the skyand Mama would be sitting right there in the living room, waiting for them with the Bible and her belt. Just the thought of getting caught sneaking back into the house made Sparkle shiver. She was pulling her jacket a little tighter around her neck when she saw the headlights of the bus headed toward them. Oh, thank God, she said. Moments later, Sparkle was collapsing in the seatrelieved, exhausted, excited. She burst into a full-on giggle as the bus roared through the streets of downtown Detroit. What are you laughing about? Sister asked, settling back into the seat. They loved my song, Sparkle practically cheered. They loved me, Sister corrected. Of course they did, Sparkle said gently, tossing a tender look in her sisters direction. Touched, Sister smiled at Sparkle. Her little sister was the only somebody who loved her unconditionallywho praised her talent consistently and, with every breath she took, made clear that she loved nothing more in the world than her big sister. Well, except for maybe her music. They loved you because you were singing my song, Sparkle deadpanned. Sister laughed and playfully shoved her sister away. That was fun, Sparkle said, still giggling. Yes it was, Sister said, leaning her head into Sparkles. Next time, though, get through the first verse and hook before you do your soul clap, because . . . Sister sat up and looked Sparkle dead in her eye. Uh, Miss Thing, next time? Well, yeah, I have a lot more songs, Sparkle said matter-of-factly. Well then you better get a lot more confidence and sing them yourself. Because slavery is over, Sister said. It was a continuation of the lecture Sister had given Sparkle all the way to the clubone that began with her begging her sister to sneak out with her and perform, continued as Sparkle and their half-sister, Dee, stashed Sisters stage outfit into a bag, stopped only

long enough for the two to slip out of Dees bedroom window, and then picked up again as the sisters ran to the bus stop and got there just in time to catch the first thing smoking at the Discovery Club. For as long as she could remember, all Sparkle had ever known about her big sister was that she wanted to sing that she wanted to see her name written in bold letters and surrounded by lights on the biggest marquees, that she dreamed of owning the stage and having fans rushing to shake her hand and take her picture and watch her on TV, maybe as she sat in Johnny Carsons chair on The Tonight Show or sang her heart out on Dick Clarks American Bandstand, just like Tina Turner and Diana Ross and the Supremes. But something changed when Sister went off to New York City in search of that fame and those bright lights. Sparkle couldnt get her to talk about what happened; all she knew was that her sister came back without anything but her suitcase and a heart full of broken dreams. Really? Youre not going to sing anymore? Sparkle questioned. No, Sister snapped. Now assume the position. Sparkle reluctantly positioned her body to block the view of their fellow passengers, giving her sister just enough room to wiggle out of her fancy sweater and skirt and into a simple top and pants. As Sister pulled the shirt over her head, a bright light caught Sparkles eye. It was the marquee at the Fillmore Theater, shining bright with Marvin Gayes name bold as could be in the center of it all. One day, Sparkle said to herself, smiling. Visions of superstardom were still flashing through Sparkles mind as she and her sister, shoes in hand, cut through their neighbors backyard and ran up to the side of the red brick Tudor standing tall and wide on their tree-lined street. Their neighborhood and home were beautiful much too well-to-do to justify two women sneaking in the side door of their house in the middle of the night. These kinds of things didnt happen in their neck of the woods and they certainly didnt happen on Emma Andersons watch. Just the thought of getting caught by Mama sneaking into her house or having to explain that they did it so that they could go sing secular soul music at that dive of a club in the middle of Detroit made Sparkles tail ache almost as much as it would if her mother got a hold of it. Terror didnt even begin to explain the emotion running through Sparkles heart as she realized her mothers bedroom light was on. She and Sister exchanged frightened glances before Sister tapped lightly on the door. Not even a beat after they knocked, Dee swung open the door and, holding her bathrobe closed to block out the cold, shuffled aside so her sisters could tumble into the house. Yall late . . . and shes up, Dee said, absentmindedly running her fingers over her curlers. Sparkle and Sister walked softly through the door and quickly up the stairs, making it into Dees room just as they heard their mothers footsteps in the hallway. She always had this stomp to her step like she was mad and on her way to tell someone about it. Didnt matter where she was headed, who she was going to see or what she had to say at the moment, Emmas brisk walk and size 9s made clear she had something to say, and everybody better get to listening. Sparkle, Sister and Dee dived into Dees bedshoes, street clothes and all and quickly pulled the covers up to their chins, trying to muffle their laughter, with no success. Nanoseconds later, Emma tapped on the door and then walked through it. She never waited for an answer. As far as she was concerned, this was her house and she could walk in and out of every room she pleased. It didnt matter if you were ready for her to be there. She didnt care if you were sleeping, studying, praying or naked if Emma Anderson had it in her mind to walk into her daughters rooms, she sure as hell wasnt going to wait for permission. What are yall doing in . . . Mama began. Her eyes set on Dees bed, where all three of her daughters lay, cuddling and smiling. My babies, she said, smiling. But yall dont love each other that much, she snapped. Sparkle, Sister, curl your hair and get to bed. We have church in the morning. And as quickly as shed arrived, Mama was gone. A beat later, she came right back in and yelled some more: And Dolores, shut that window! My heater aint on for the fun of it! And with that, Emma stomped on back down the hallway. Sparkle and Sister tried their best to muffle their giggles. Dolores reeled back as she watched her fully clothed sisters tumble out of her bed. Yall heifers sneak out and I get fussed at? Of course, that made Sparkle and Sister laugh harder. Dolores didnt know what to do with her crazy sisters. So she just shook her head, closed her window and climbed back into her bed as they peeked out her door, checked to make sure the coast was clear and disappeared into the dark hallway, their muffled giggles rising above the din of the crickets screaming outside her window. **PRESENTATION DE L'DITEUR THEY HAD A DREAM. SHE HAD IT ALL.** Detroit, 1968. The Motown sound is sweeping the nation. Girl groups are hotter than ever. Over their mothers objections, three beautiful sisters Dolores, Sister and Sparkle are taking the local music scene by storm. But their dreams are bigger than Detroit. Their manager, Stix, is just as ambitious and will do whatever it takes to make it to the big time, even if it means using the girls and his love for Sparkle as the foundation of a new musical empire. Behind the music and lights, the recording industry is a ruthless and unforgiving place, just as Mama had warned her girls. Sister, with her good looks and voice, is the natural headliner of the trio, yet her complicated personal life threatens to overshadow her talent; Dolores

has her sights set on a different kind of life outside the spotlight; and young Sparkle must push past her deepest fears if she is to fulfill her destiny does she really have what it takes to go all the way? Riveting and soul-stirring, this timeless tale reminds us of the unbreakable bonds between family, the high price of fame and what can happen when we dare to show the world how brightly we can sparkle.