

The Spark of Reason

by Michael Halperin

Inspired by a true story.

In Amsterdam, Holland, 25 year-old Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza battles against the injustice of a so-called republican government that uses fear to destroy civil liberties. His brash speeches and writing raise the fearful specter in his community of the possibility of a new Inquisition. Spinoza's angry and jealous sister, Rebekah, eager to inherit their father's business, uses her brother's passion for social justice and charges him with heresy. The leaders of the community, anxious to avoid the stigma of disloyalty to the state, latch on to her accusation as a tool for ridding themselves of the young troublemaker. Spinoza falls in love with Clara van den Ende, an outspoken, liberated woman who attempts to turn him away from his dogged determination. Failing that, she abandons him to the wrath of his people who wage a devastating battle against Spinoza. His teacher, Saul Levi Morteira, begs him to recant. When the young man refuses, Morteira becomes his chief inquisitor at a trial that will eventually affect society, politics, religion and science.

8 men / 2 women

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