

= Divergent (novel) =

Divergent is the debut novel of American novelist Veronica Roth , published by HarperCollins Children 's Books in 2011 . The novel is the first of the Divergent trilogy , a series of young @-@ adult dystopian novels set in the Divergent Universe . The novel Divergent features a post @-@ apocalyptic version of Chicago and follows Beatrice " Tris " Prior as she explores her identity within a society that defines its citizens by their social and personality @-@ related affiliation with five factions , which removes the threat of anyone exercising independent will and re @-@ threatening the population 's safety . Underlying the action and dystopian focused main plot is a romantic subplot between Tris and one of her instructors in the Dauntless faction , nicknamed Four .

The novel has been compared to other young adult books such as The Hunger Games and The Maze Runner because of its similar themes and target audience . In particular , the novel explores the themes common to young adult fiction , such as adult authority and the transition from childhood to maturity , as well as such broader motifs as the place of violence and social structures within a post @-@ apocalyptic society . Its major plot device , the division of society into personality types , is one used in other science fiction works . Beyond its literary context , Roth 's open declaration of her religion as a Christian has brought commentary from Christian communities both endorsing and challenging the novel .

Roth wrote Divergent while working on a Creative Writing degree at Northwestern University , and it was quickly purchased for publication alongside the subsequent books in the trilogy (completed in October 2013) . Summit Entertainment purchased the media rights to the book in 2011 and subsequently produced a film adaptation titled Divergent which was released March 21 , 2014 . The film , a success amongst audiences , generated \$ 288 @,@ 747 @,@ 895 at the box office despite mixed reviews from critics .

= = Background and setting = =

The novel is Veronica Roth 's debut novel and was published a little over a year after Roth graduated with a Bachelor 's degree from the Creative Writing program at Northwestern University . Roth wrote the novel during her senior year winter break and sold movie rights to the novel before she graduated .

The novel is set in a post @-@ apocalyptic Chicago . Roth indicated that she did not originally intend to use Chicago as the setting :

I wrote the rough draft and I felt like it needed a more grounded sense of place , and I looked at the city I had described , which is all these trains constantly moving , and this lake marsh , and these rivers . And I realized that it was Chicago already , and it was just because that 's the city I 've known and loved the longest .

= = Plot = =

In a post @-@ apocalyptic Chicago , survivors are divided into five factions based on their dispositions : Abnegation , for the selfless ; Amity , for the peaceful ; Candor , for the honest ; Dauntless , for the brave ; and Erudite , for the intellectual . Each year , all sixteen @-@ year @-@ olds take an aptitude test that determines the faction for which they are best suited . After receiving the results , test takers choose a faction at the Choosing Ceremony , no matter what their results were . Those who do not complete initiation into their new faction become " factionless " and are forced to live in poverty on the streets of the city .

Sixteen @-@ year @-@ old Beatrice Prior is born into an Abnegation family . She doesn 't feel she belongs in Abnegation because she doesn 't see herself as naturally selfless . Her aptitude test results are inconclusive and indicate aptitude for three factions ? Abnegation , Erudite , and Dauntless . The test administrator warns her never to tell anyone that her results were inconclusive as this marks her as " Divergent " . Beatrice agonizes over Choosing Day , unsure about staying in Abnegation with her parents or moving to a different faction . On Choosing Day , Beatrice decides to

leave Abnegation and join Dauntless . Her brother Caleb chooses Erudite .

The Dauntless instructor , Four , explains that not all Dauntless initiates will be allowed to enter the faction . The initiates will have to go through a series of training and evaluation . Unique to this faction , only the top ten initiates will stay , while the rest will be dismissed and become factionless ; by contrast , the other factions allow everyone who complete initiation to enter . During her initiation , Beatrice renames herself Tris and befriends transfer initiates Christina , Al , and Will but comes into conflict with fellow initiates Peter , Drew , and Molly . She also befriends Dauntless @-@ born initiates Uriah , Lynn , and Marlene .

Initiation into Dauntless is composed of three stages . The first involves learning how to handle guns and knives and hand @-@ to @-@ hand combat with other initiates . Tris lacks the physical strength of most of her fellow initiates but finishes in sixth place by beating the higher @-@ ranked Molly . When the rankings for Stage 1 of initiation are announced , a jealous Peter , who finished second , stabs first @-@ place Edward in the eye with a butter knife during the night . Edward then leaves Dauntless to be Factionless , and his girlfriend Myra follows him out of Dauntless .

During Visiting Day , Tris learns that her mother 's faction of origin was Dauntless .

Erudite stirs dissent against the Abnegation leadership in the city 's government and accuses Marcus , the Abnegation leader , of abusing his son . The fact that Marcus 's son joined Dauntless two years before , and Tris ' and Caleb 's choices at the Choosing Ceremony , where they switched factions instead of remaining in Abnegation adds to the rumors . Abnegation is also alleged to be hoarding supplies meant to be sent out in the city .

The initiates enter Stage 2 of their training , which involves simulations similar to the aptitude tests . Initiates are forced to face hallucinations based upon their deepest fears . The simulations act in a hypnotic fashion and initiates forget their situation isn 't real . Tris ' Divergent abilities enable her to remember that she 's facing a simulation , not reality . She uses this advantage and wins top rank in the class . Peter , Drew , and Al attack Tris in revenge with a threatened sexual assault and attempt to kill her by throwing her into the chasm at Dauntless headquarters . Four intervenes and stops it . Later , Al begs for Tris 's forgiveness , but she rebuffs him . He later commits suicide by jumping into the chasm where he tried to kill Tris .

The final stage of Dauntless initiation gathers all their fears in a single simulation landscape . All the initiates , including the Divergents , are aware they are under a simulation and must use the skills they 've learned in the previous stages to overcome each obstacle . Tris ' relationship with Four continues to grow as she prepares for the last stage of testing , and he lets her into his own fear landscape . Four has four fears in his landscape , which is an uncommonly low number , hence his nickname . She also learns he is really Marcus ' son Tobias , the child of the Abnegation leader the Erudites accused of child abuse . Four shares information with Tris that he discovered about Erudite 's plans to use Dauntless to stage an attack on Abnegation .

Tris successfully overcomes seven fears in her fear landscape . After her test , she and the other Dauntless members are injected with a new " tracking " serum that supposedly activates if someone goes missing .

Before the official initiation ceremony , Four invites Tris back to his private apartment , and Tris expresses her feelings for him . The ceremony begins with the post of final rankings and Tris is ranked first . In the midst of celebrating she suddenly realizes Erudite will use the " tracking " serum to force Dauntless members to carry out their invasion of Abnegation .

The night after the ceremony , the serum induces a simulation and all the Dauntless become sleep @-@ walking soldiers under orders to attack the Abnegation compound . The serum doesn 't work on Tris or Tobias (Four) because they are Divergent . Tris and Tobias try to break away from the pack and escape as they arrive at the Abnegation compound , but Tris is shot and wounded . Tobias refuses to leave her behind and they are captured and brought before Jeanine , the Erudite leader who is the mastermind of the whole attack . She injects Four with an experimental serum that overrides his Divergence , to control what he can see and hear . Jeanine directs Tobias back to the Dauntless control room to oversee the attack and sentences Tris to death . Tris wakes up sealed inside a real @-@ life glass tank that fills up with water , but her mother breaks the tank and rescues her . Her mother reveals that she is also Divergent before she is killed helping Tris escape . Tris

gets away but is forced to kill Will , who attacks her under the influence of the simulation .

She finds her father , Andrew , and Tobias ' father , Marcus in a safe house . Tris tells them the reason for Dauntless ' attack on Abnegation . Later , Caleb , Marcus , Andrew , and Tris head to the Dauntless compound to find the source of the simulation and fight their way through to Dauntless headquarters . Tris ' father sacrifices himself to clear the way for her to reach the control room . She confronts the mind @-@ controlled Tobias , who attacks her . Tris realizes she can 't bring herself to kill him and surrenders . This causes Tobias to break through the special sight @-@ and @-@ sound @-@ only simulation . Freed , Tobias helps Tris shut down the Erudite simulation and free the remaining Dauntless from their mind control . They rejoin Caleb , Marcus , and Peter , who helped Tris find the control room in exchange for his safety . The group boards a train to the Amity sector to find the rest of the Abnegation survivors .

= = Style = =

Many reviewers stated that the novel 's writing style offers a distinctive , quick prose that creates a fast @-@ paced reading experience . Susan Dominus , writing in The New York Times described the style as " brisk pacing , lavish flights of imagination and writing that occasionally startles with fine detail " . Abby Nolan , from The American Prospect , noted that Divergent follows the structural and stylistic patterns of The Hunger Games and Blood Red Road .

= = Themes = =

= = = Identity = = =

As in other children 's and young adult fiction , the novel probes placement of authority and identity within the youth 's relationship to parents and other social forces . Critic Antero Garcia describes the thematic similarity between these dystopian novels as an interest in the " grasp of power between youth and adult authority " and compared the novel to Unwind by Neal Shusterman . In The New York Times , Susan Dominus stated that Divergent " explores a more common adolescent anxiety--the painful realization that coming into one 's own sometimes means leaving family behind ideologically and physically " . The Voice of Youth Advocates agrees , writing that Divergent shows the pressure of " having to choose between following in your parents ' footsteps or doing something new " . Critic Antero Garcia compared the thematic interest in the characters being " forced into limiting constraints of identity and labor associated with their identity " to similar interest in forced identities and labor in the dystopian children 's novels Matched by Allyson Braithwaite Condie and The Maze Runner by James Dashner .

= = = Social structure and knowledge = = =

Government division of its population into fragmented communities is a frequent device in young adult (YA) children 's fiction . YA classics such as Lois Lowry 's The Giver , Monica Hughes 's The Dream Catcher , and Zilpha Snyder 's Green Sky Trilogy use this device to different ends . In her masters thesis , Ashley Ann Haynes describes fractioning of societies within Divergent as a supporting comparison with Hunger Games . Divergent adds a new layer of complexity with its creation of an illusion of democracy for participants in its fractioned society , with the factions controlled by outside force .

Some reviews criticize the lack of depth and realism of the social structures within the novel . Kirkus Reviews called the social structure a " preposterous premise " . Booklist called the structure a " simplistic , color @-@ coded world [that] stretches credibility on occasion " . In a review for the University of Wisconsin @-@ Whitewater 's student newspaper " Royal Purple News " , Abrielle Backhaus notes how the " entire system seems insubstantial " and asks rhetorically " How could it be possible for any individual , with his or her infinite emotions and experiences , to be condensed to

one single quality to tolerate for the rest of their lives and to choose at the mere age of 16 ? " In an interview Roth describes the social structure to have expanded from her initial conception , adding Candor to fill " a gap in the reasoning behind the world that needed to be filled " .

Social structure most affects the novel 's themes by socially dividing different knowledge types that characters can access . In her book chapter exploring how literacy in different knowledge types affects the series , Alice Curry describes the factions , and character indoctrination in those factions , as deliberately creating knowledge gaps between initiates to different factions . Because of the initiation process , the characters become illiterate in the knowledge valued by the other factions . Tris 's " divergence " allows her to be successful because she can become literate in a broad set of knowledges and information types , and thus she becomes more admirable to the reader . Curry argues that Jeanine 's leadership within Erudite represents an academic " Ivory Tower " that alienates other types of knowledge , thus the book critiques academic learning , in favor of the broader literacy embodied by Tris . Curry compares the novel to Julie Bertagna 's 2002 Exodus , describing both as using spaces and landscapes where knowledge is learned to critique " crumbling knowledge institutions " , like academic spaces , that " dissemble " knowledge instead of facilitating deeper holistic knowledge literacies that create " understanding " .

= = = Violence and fear = = =

Like The Hunger Games , Divergent depicts considerable violence for a Young Adult novel . The Publishers Weekly review emphasized this stylistic choice , calling it " edgy " and describing the initiation rituals that Tris endures " as spellbinding as they are violent [requiring] sadistic tests of strength and courage " . But , as Susan Dominus points out , the novel doesn 't keep this violence at the forefront of reader experience ; she writes in The New York Times , that " Terrible things happen to the people Tris loves , yet the characters absorb these events with disquieting ease . Here , somehow , the novel 's flights from reality distance the reader from the emotional impact that might come in a more affecting realistic (or even fantasy) novel . "

When describing her inspiration for the Dauntless training their initiates through exposing them to their fears , Roth , in an interview for the website " PopSugar " , says , though influenced by many sources , the most important was her " Psych 101 my first year of college [where] I learned about exposure therapy , which is when they treat people with fear , like for anxiety . It exposes them repeatedly to what they 're afraid of , and gradually you become less afraid of it , or have a healthy level of fear , and I thought of the Dauntless then , because they 're conditioning perfectly normal people to get over perfectly rational fears . " Daniel Kraus 's Booklist review of the novel described the intense psychological pressure as like " akin to joining the marines " but also providing the " built @-@ in tension " that makes the novel a compelling read .

= = = Christianity = = =

Though the novel does not maintain an overtly Christian thematic interest , some readers place the novel 's themes within this context because of Roth 's professed religiosity . In the postscript " Acknowledgements " , Roth emphasizes her Christian faith saying " Thank you , God , for your Son and for blessing me beyond comprehension . " For some reviewers this element of Roth 's lifestyle is important to the novel 's impact ; for example , when reviewing the novel for the Christian Ministry " Break Point " , Sherry Early describes Roth as " a Christian " and the novel setting as " post @-@ feminist , maybe even Christian " . She also says that though the novel is " not overtly Christian " , it follows a " Christian point of view " because it " fight [s] against the restrictions placed upon her by a controlling and totalitarian state " and because " Tris must also explore the cracks and imperfections within her own psyche . " K. B. Hoyle also acknowledges that the novel would have a " Christian message " , when reviewing the novel for the Evangelical book review organization The Gospel Coalition . However , Hoyle criticizes the novel for using profane terminology and for never " clarify [ing] what the practices are supposed to mean " .

Reviewers outside the Christian community have also noticed the Christian context of the novel . In

a review of the book and first movie , David Edelstein observed the book 's treatment of intellectuals as following a tendency in Christian culture to question genetic modification and majority : the intellectual Erudite faction are largely depicted as control @-@ hungry villains pitted against the Abnegation faction , who are depicted as righteous and merciful . He wrote " The novelist , Veronica Roth , reserves her loathing for the ' Erudites ' , who spend their days in intellectual pursuit , " and that the trend of intellectualism (thinking without feeling) " makes people apt to seize power and impose Maoist @-@ like uniformity on entire populations ? on pain of death . "

= = Reception = =

Divergent has received mostly positive reviews . In a review in The New York Times , Susan Dominus wrote that it was " rich in plot and imaginative details " , but also that , compared to other such books in the same genre as the Hunger Games trilogy , it did " not exactly distinguish itself " . In a review for Entertainment Weekly , Breia Brissey said that it was " flimsier and less nuanced " than The Hunger Games but was good , giving it a B + rating . Similarly , though critiquing the " simplistic , color @-@ coded world " , Booklist reviewer Daniel Kraus positively concluded that the novel was full of " gutsy action and romance " and called it a " spin on Brave New World " . Kirkus said it was " built with careful details and intriguing scope " . Common Sense Media commented on the book 's " deep messages about identity and controlling societies " and on the " unstoppable plot that 's remarkably original " . It was rated 5 out of 5 stars and given an age 13 + rating .

The book debuted at number six on the New York Times Children 's Chapter Books Best Seller list on May 22 , 2011 , and remained on the list for 11 weeks . It also spent 39 weeks on the Children 's Paperback list in 2012 , reaching number one . The Times changed its Children 's Best Seller lists in December 2012 , eliminating the Children 's Paperback list and recognizing " middle grade " and " young adult " books separately ; Divergent continued its run on the new Young Adult Best Seller list . The novel stayed on the list for 47 weeks until November 3 , 2013 . According to Publishers Weekly , the combined three volumes of the Divergent series sold over 6 @.@ 7 million copies in 2013 (three million hardcovers , 1 @.@ 7 million paperbacks , and just under two million e @-@ books) . In the lead up to the release of the film adaptation , Roth 's novel topped USA Today 's Best @-@ Selling Books list in January 2014 .

Divergent won Favorite book of 2011 in 2011 's Goodreads Readers Choice Awards , and won the senior category of the 2014 Young Reader 's Choice Award . It was also number one in the Teens ' Top Ten Vote , sponsored by YALSA .

= = Film adaptation = =

Summit Entertainment bought the rights to film an adaptation of the novel in 2011 . Summit recruited Neil Burger to direct . Initially , Summit gave the film a budget of \$ 40 million , but Lionsgate later increased it to \$ 80 million (which finally changed to \$ 85 million) due to the success of The Hunger Games .

Shailene Woodley was chosen to star as Beatrice " Tris " Prior . The role of Tobias " Four " Eaton eventually went to Theo James after an extensive search . Kate Winslet was signed as Jeanine Matthews . Also recruited into the cast were Maggie Q as Tori , Zoe Kravitz as Christina , Ansel Elgort as Caleb , Miles Teller as Peter , Ashley Judd as Natalie Prior , Tony Goldwyn as Andrew Prior , and Jai Courtney as Eric .

Filming began in Chicago on April 16 , 2013 and concluded on July 16 , 2013 , with nearly all filming taking place in Chicago . The film was released March 21 , 2014 , earning \$ 150 @,@ 947 @,@ 895 in North America , and \$ 137 @,@ 228 @,@ 004 in other countries , for a worldwide total of \$ 288 @,@ 175 @,@ 899 . The critic aggregating sites Rotten Tomatoes and Metacritic both noted the films mixed reviews . However , audience surveyor CinemaScore showed that audiences were very receptive to the film .