

Librarian's Shelf by Rachelle McPhillips

Divergent

Imagine with me for a moment that you have lived in one community with the same people your entire life. Everyone in your community holds one value higher than all others and the characteristics associated with that principle dictate your dress, your diet, your activities and your vocation.

This is life for sixteen-year-old Beatrice in, "Divergent" by Veronica Roth. Beatrice has grown up in one of five factions that divide Chicago in the near future. In the Abnegation faction, people behave selflessly. They do not call attention to themselves. They dress modestly in gray, they do not look at themselves in a mirror every day, and they do not run.

Beatrice struggles to feel like she fits in with her family. She believes her brother and her mother are admirably selfless, and she does not feel like she can possibly measure up.

When she is sixteen, she is given an aptitude test that reveals her true nature and she has to choose the faction of her upbringing or a new faction where she will be trained in their way of life.

She is not alone at the Choosing Ceremony. Other sixteen-year-olds from all five factions are selecting their futures as well. She watches as some choose to remain in their home factions and others choose new factions, which means they may never see their families again.

They choose between Erudite, the faction that values education and knowledge and believes the world's ills could be blamed on ignorance.

Those who believed that dishonesty was at fault for human woes formed Candor. This group speaks frankly and strives for impartiality.

The Dauntless are just that, holding courage and bravery as the quality to be most admired. They believe cowards led the world to ruin.

People who believed aggression was the root of societal evil formed the Amity faction. To Beatrice the members of this peace-loving faction seem kind and free.

"Divergent" is a fast-paced young adult novel that I feel confident will appeal to guys and girls, young and old. We hear people talking about values all the time. It is a buzzword in American politics. In the Chicago that Roth has created for us, people have clearly defined those values, have focused on and embraced one of them, and are living them as fully as they can.

At that level, this might sound like a utopian novel. It is not. Things do not run as smoothly as the faction founders must have hoped, and this novel is full of danger and suspense.

"Divergent" stands out in the current crop of dystopian young adult literature, and should not be missed. The second book in this planned trilogy, "Insurgent," is due out in May. The film rights

for the first book have been sold and a screenplay has been written. I am crossing my fingers that we will see this one on the big screen.

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