



Divergent: A Spoiler Free Review

Young Adult Science Fiction adventure novels by Veronica Roth set in a post-apocalyptic dystopian Chicago. The trilogy consists of *Divergent*, *Insurgent* and *Allegiant*. There is also a fourth book that consists of stories from character Four's point of view.

Originally published: 26 April 2011

Author: Veronica Roth

Page count: 487 (first edition)

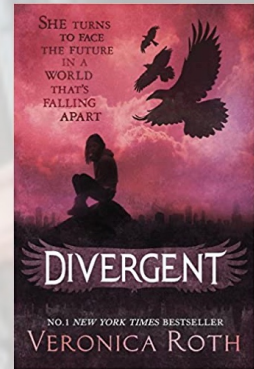
Publisher: HarperCollins

Series: Divergent Trilogy

Genres: Young Adult fiction, Romance, Science Fiction, Dystopian Fiction

Quick statistics:

- Overall: 4.5/5 stars
- Characters: 4/5 stars
- Setting: 4/5 stars
- Writing: 4.5/5 stars
- Plot and Themes: 5/5 stars
- Review in a Nutshell: An exciting page turner with unimaginable twists and turns. It's everything you could want and more!



//CONTENT WARNING: death, grief/mourning, suicide, physical violence, weaponry, insecurities//

What is Divergent about?

In Beatrice Prior's dystopian Chicago world, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to the cultivation of a particular virtue—Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). On an appointed day of every year, all sixteen-year-olds must select the faction to which they will devote the rest of their lives. For Beatrice, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is—she can't have both. So, she makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself.

During the highly competitive initiation that follows, Beatrice renames herself Tris and struggles alongside her fellow initiates to live out the choice they have made. Together they must undergo extreme physical tests of endurance and intense psychological simulations, some with devastating consequences. As initiation transforms them all, Tris must determine who her friends really are—and where, exactly, a romance with a sometimes fascinating, other times exasperating boy fits into the life she's chosen. But Tris also has a secret, one she's kept hidden from everyone because she's been warned it can result in death. And as she discovers unrest and growing conflict that threaten to unravel her seemingly perfect society, she also learns that her secret might help her save those she loves . . . or it might destroy her.

My thoughts and feelings

Although not being the most original plot that displays the devastating reality of what could become our future, Veronica Roth brings amazing characters to life through every page. I knew I was going to love this book from the first page, even though I had only read a few lines. And it is of course, better than the movie.

Though there are many, many moments of danger and possible death, it's not always full of pure seriousness! Humour is a part of why I loved the characters and the book so much.

"Peter would probably throw a party if I stopped breathing."

"Well," he says, "I would only go if there was cake."

The romance between Tris and Four also plays a big part in the series as they have both become accustomed to emotional barriers they have created for themselves, making it hard for them to truly let another person in. They teach each other about the other's self-worth constantly.

"You know, most boys would enjoy being trapped in close quarters with a girl." I roll my eyes.

"Not claustrophobic people, Tris."

I also loved the friendship between Tris and Christina, although they did have their hardships. What friendship doesn't? It's how they support and encourage each other when things get really difficult during initiation.

"no wonder you left."

Yeah," I say, rolling my eyes. "It was just because of the food."

Tris manages time and time again to prove herself to people who in truth, don't deserve to see how brilliant she truly can be.

"People tend to overestimate my character," I say quietly. "They think that because I'm small, or a girl, or a Stiff, I can't possibly be cruel.

But they're wrong."

This book is all about taking risks and learning about your own individual strengths. So...

"I'll say it one last time: Be brave."

How did the UK handle Corona Virus?

2020 has undoubtedly been one of the most unusual years in recent times. The losses and tragedies due to coronavirus have been nothing short of horrific; the UK suffering a staggering 44 thousand deaths due to the pandemic. However, the pandemic has also brought to light the hard work of the often underappreciated NHS staff, commemorated by the weekly applause or the reduced price in many businesses. The public has also become increasingly active in scrutinising the actions and decisions of the government. The general opinion in nearly all sides of the political spectrum is one of criticism and discontent.

A poll of the British public found that in May, 39% of people thought that the government was not handling the pandemic well, however by July, this percentage rose to 56%. The general consensus is clearly negative, however it is debatable whether this opinion is justified or even valid. There is some evidence to suggest that the UK did handle the pandemic well, particularly the NHS, who laid down a plan to free up beds by discharging the medically fit, and pausing non urgent operations, which was a great success as at the peak of the virus they were able to free 33,000 beds to treat corona virus. Furthermore, the NHS according to many of the workers, did an excellent job at supporting staff and providing necessary equipment e.g. ventilators. Additionally, many temporary field hospitals were set up which further maximised covid capacity.

When talking about accountability, many people obviously point to Boris Johnson. Although there are those who say he did the best in the situation he was given, taking appropriate measures according to the advice given to him by the scientists and experts, others argue that his actions clearly show incompetence, particularly during the early stages of the pandemic.

Johnson reportedly missed five cobra meetings. The official advice he gave to the public a month after the first case was 'business as usual'. The first lockdown, imposed in March, was dangerously late according to many experts, coming into action after 300 deaths and nearly 7,000 confirmed cases, with the lockdown itself not being particularly strict - no travel restrictions were imposed until 4 months later in June.

The government arguably failed on other fronts; failing to provide PPE for the frontline workers, allowing patients to be discharged to carehomes without a test and abandoning contract tracing at the peak of the pandemic.

In places like Vietnam where nobody died, swift and immediate action was undertaken after the first case was confirmed, putting into place contact tracing, travel restrictions and health checkpoints from the off, resulting in less than 500 cases.

Conversely, when one considers the death to case ratio, the UK has one of roughly 5.6% whereas other places such as Mexico where it was over 10%, were significantly higher. Many people blame the President of Mexico who provided very little guidance, however at the peak of the virus in the UK, Boris had a daily conference where he provided information and answered the public's questions, something which was praised even by his critics.

In hindsight it is very easy to criticise, point out flaws, and place blame, however it is important that this doesn't take away from the actions of the public, the millions of people who followed the guidelines and rules in order to protect each other and keep the country safe, which in my opinion is worth celebrating.

- Nirmal De Britto



Music of the Month



Nov
2020

The Neighbourhood

Overview: The Neighbourhood, also known as The NBHD, are a band of five who formed in 2011 in Newbury Park, California. Their main genre of music is alternative rock, however they branch out into indie rock too.

Members: Jesse Rutherford (lead singer), Jeremy Freedman and Zach Ables (guitarists), Mikey Margot (bassist) and Brandon Fried (drummer)

Albums and popular songs: Currently NBHD have released 12 albums, some being the remastered edition to others or even the deluxe versions. 'I Love You' was their earliest album and their most recent album was 'Chip Chrome & the Mono-Tones' (est. 24/09/2020) with Chip Chrome being the newest persona of the 28-year-old lead singer Jesse. Their top three most popular songs are 'Sweater Weather', 'Daddy issues' and 'R.I.P to my youth', with 'Sweater Weather' having over 640 million streams on Spotify!

My opinion: In my opinion, there is nothing not to love about The Neighbourhood. They are my favourite band now, I enjoy their creativity and admire their slightly wacky music style!

Pros:

- Not the normal mainstream pop music
- Perfect blend between alternative and new-time rock
- Meaningful sentiments and lyrics

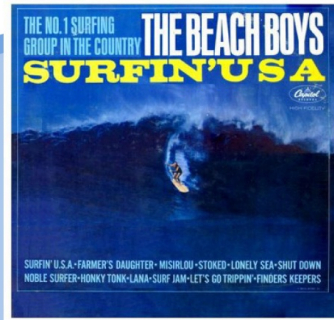
Cons:

- Occasional use of profanity
- Some albums, 'I Love You' specifically, considered cheesy/predictable.
- Touch on some delicate topics in a few songs

Email me at Brooksm41@hwbcymru.net to have your favourite band or musician be considered for the next edition of 'Music of the Month'!

- Maya Brooks

Music Recommendations



Surfin' USA by The Beach Boys:

This is a brilliantly cheerful tune! It's the kind of song that makes me want to start dancing - and I don't usually like to dance.

The classic reached No. 3 in the US Billboard Hot 100 of 1963 and is part of The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 500 Songs that Shaped the Rock and Roll list.

This will get you in the right mood!



Windy by The Association:

I think that this one is great for rainy days - like today as I'm writing this! This song has quite a warm and relaxed feel to it and it's great for putting on in the background or just to listen to by itself. In 1962 it got the No. 1 spot on both the US Billboard Hot 100 and US Cash Box 100. It's definitely one that will get stuck in your head!



Walk, Don't Run by The Ventures:

A very relaxing and addictive instrumental, it's one that's not hard to listen to repeatedly! It's great for winding down after a long day. It peaked at No. 2 on US Billboard Hot 100 in 1960 and is No. 82 on Rolling Stone Magazine's 100 Greatest Guitar Songs of All Time list.

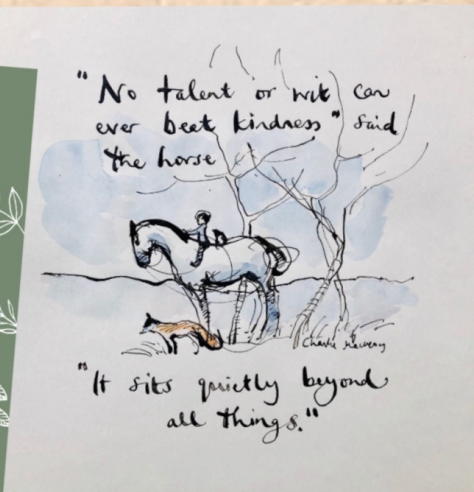
- Gregory Williams

Positive Quotes and Affirmations Board

A SMOOTH SEA
NEVER MADE A
SKILLED SAILOR.

the beauty of you
is how you wear
who you are.

-timothy egart



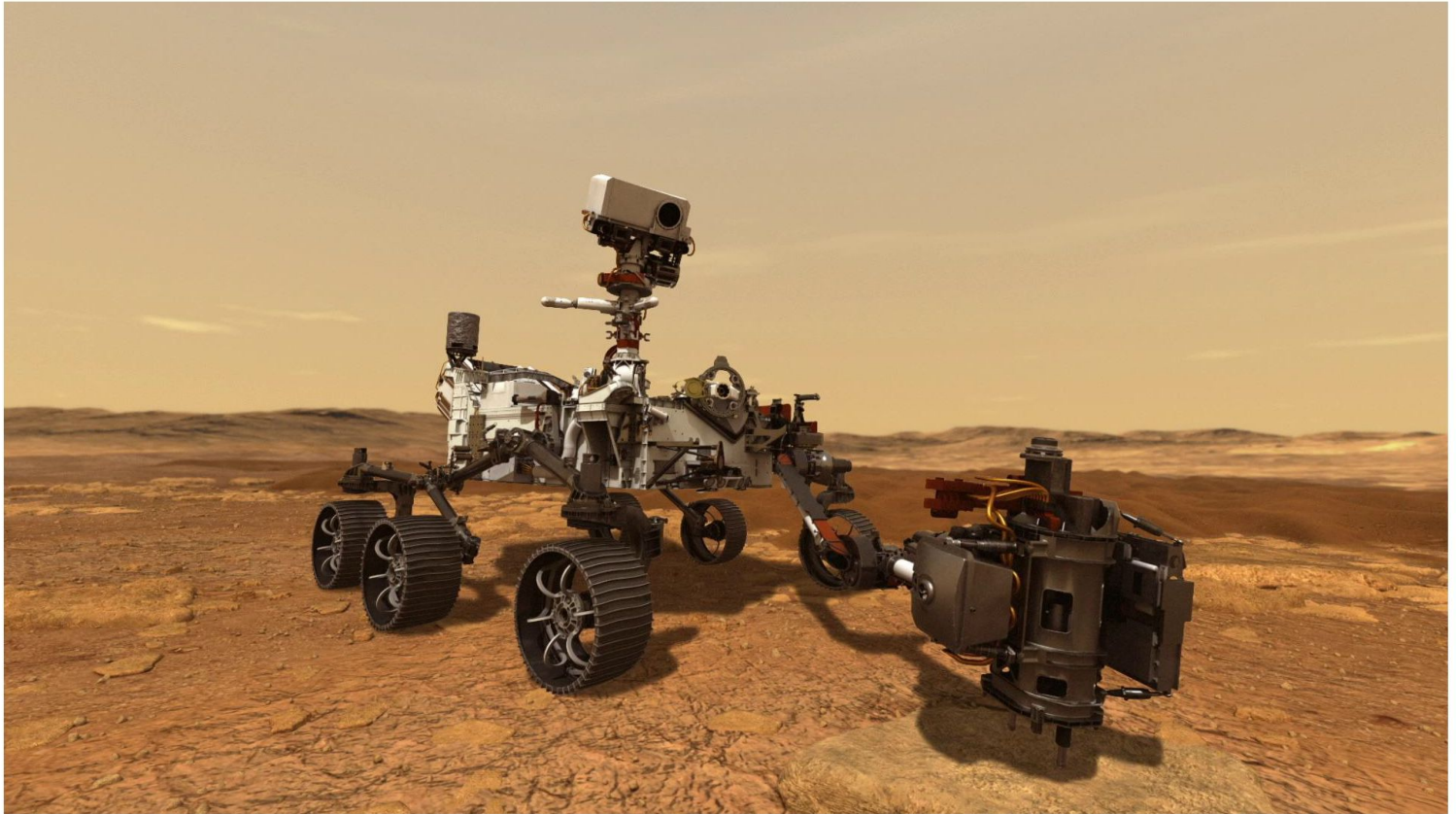
I never lose.
I either
win or learn.

Nelson Mandela

Better
an *oops*
than a
what if.

**There is no
"right time",
there is just
time & what
you choose
to do with it.**

Mars 2020: Perseverance



Category: science/technology

Mars 2020: perseverance

On July 30th 2020, an Atlas V rocket carrying a Mars rover launched, planned to land in February 2021, the most ambitious Mars rover so far.

The rover, named Perseverance, has a large payload of scientific instruments designed to learn more about Mars and a small helicopter, named Ingenuity. If successful, Ingenuity will make the first powered flight on a planet other than Earth and carries two cameras (one colour and one black and white).

By far the most ambitious part of the Mars 2020 mission is the plan to recover the first samples of Mars rocks to send back to Earth in collaboration with the European Space Agency to study and look for signs of ancient life. After Perseverance collects enough samples they will be sealed and dropped onto the surface for a future mission to collect.

A new lander will then be launched and after landing, deploy a small rover. This will pick up the samples and launch them back into space to be picked up by an orbiting satellite, which then sends the samples back to Earth. They are expected to return by 2031. When they do arrive, researchers and scientists will be able to examine the first ever Mars rocks on Earth and will hopefully help when humans eventually land on Mars.

- Ioan Phillips