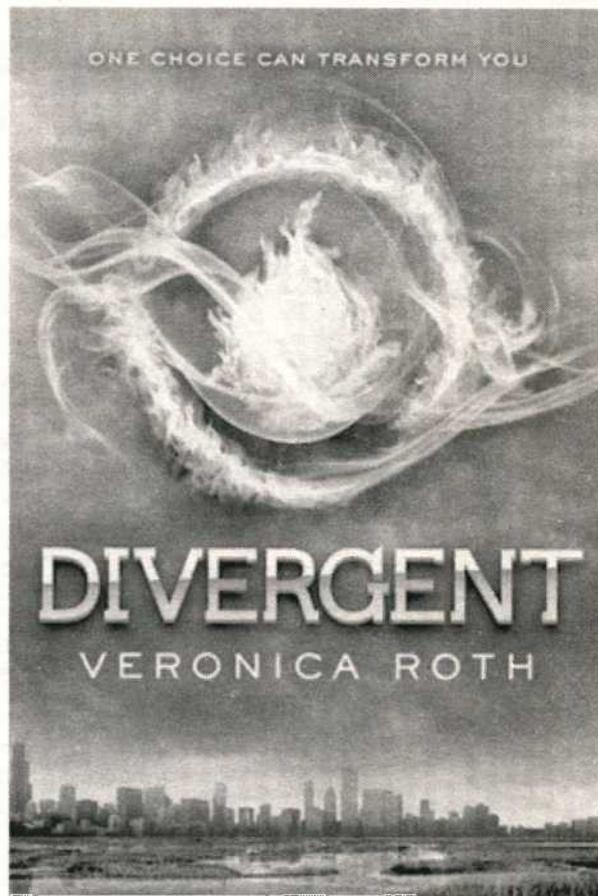


# Divergent: From Book to Screen

By Hayley Bahnemann



Book Cover

Picking a major is probably the most stressful part of a college student's experience, but what would happen if a decision of that magnitude was made at sixteen? In Veronica Roth's thrilling series, *Divergent*, sixteen year olds take an aptitude test that should tell them where they "fit" in society.

Rather than choosing a career, Beatrice Prior and her brother Caleb are forced to choose which of the five factions they want to live in—Abnegation, the selfless; Amity, the peaceful; Candor, the honest; Dauntless, the brave; or Erudite, the intelligent—and this decision could ultimately mean they could leave their family, and the only life they have known, behind.

"I'm not even sixteen, I'm nineteen and obviously I don't know where I should go for the rest of my life, let alone a sixteen year old wouldn't know, said Ansel Elgort, the actor playing Caleb. "That's why it's a super flawed system."

In the first book of the series, Beatrice switches factions after finding out that she is divergent—she doesn't fit into one specific faction, she could belong in several. Upon hearing this, Beatrice learns that she can never tell anyone she is divergent, for fear of being killed. As the story goes on, Beatrice (nicknamed Tris) faces many different obstacles and is forced to make decisions that no sixteen-year-old should have to make.

On March 5, 2014 author Veronica Roth and Elgort, made an appearance at the Mall of America; they took "selfies" with fans, signed books and posters, and answered a few questions on the red carpet. After this, they let some lucky fans and a few reporters watch an advanced screening of the movie. For fans of the series, this was probably the most anticipated part of the evening.

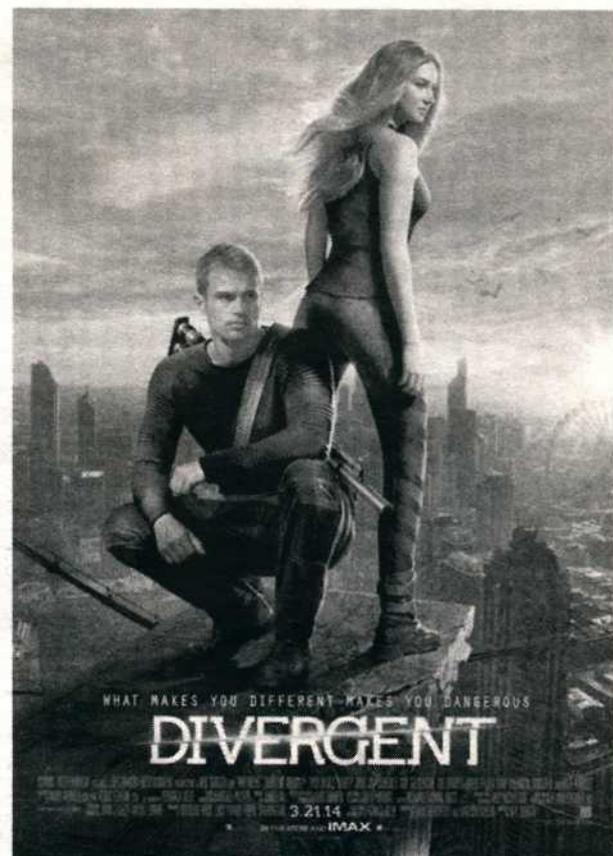
The following day, Roth and Elgort participated in a round table discussion with a select group of reporters. Roth is only twenty-five-years-old and came up with the idea for this series while a freshman in college, although it was not written down until four years later. Elgort is nineteen-years-old and a relatively new face to the big screen, having only been a part of *Carrie* prior to this movie. Despite the recent success

the trilogy and the movie series have acquired, both Roth and Elgort would not call themselves "successful." Elgort said, "I worked really hard in school. I went to an acting high school and I went to an acting middle school, I was never not in a show, and all of a sudden it turned into being in real movies. Luck is a part of it, when opportunity meets preparation."

Roth added, "You have said before that you worked really hard, but you are also very lucky. There are so many talented people that work so hard for so long and it just never happens so, the timing of it, I guess, is big. I feel really fortunate and I know that I have to keep working harder everyday to become a better writer."

As the author of a book series quickly growing in popularity, Roth said, "I am afraid of messages, so I hope that the book not only entertains but provokes questions that readers can find their own answers to. The second the book came out, and I kind of let it go. It belongs to the readers so much more than it belongs to me. Everyone gets to interpret it and form their own opinions."

The *Divergent* trilogy has been completed, but Roth and Elgort are still working. Roth is currently writing a set of four short stories from the point of view of Four, Tris's love interest in the series, which will be published in one book sometime in July. The book will be entitled *Four*, and three of them take place before the events in *Divergent*, while the last one takes place at the same time. Elgort, while promoting his new film *The Fault in Our Stars* (based on the book by John Green) coming out in early June, will begin filming *Insurgent*, the sequel to *Divergent*, in May or June. This movie premiered on March 21 and has been doing rather well because viewers can relate to Tris's struggle to fit in and the aptitude tests she and the other characters have to take. A person of any age range from an 8th grade boy struggling to get good grades to a college senior figuring out how to survive on her own can enjoy this book and relate to the themes and the struggles on their own level.



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