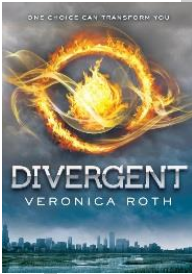




Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons Teacher's Book Review



Divergent, Veronica Roth

Reviewed by Ms. Cosgrove, March 6th, 2013

Picture a world, in the future, where there are no nations and limited resources. Now picture communities, called factions, which are organized around personality types. Those people who value truth, over all other things, would belong to the Candor faction and those that value courage would belong to the Dauntless faction. Individuals who believe in the supremacy of the mind would be members of the Erudite faction and those who believe in the importance of joy would be members of the Amity faction. Finally humans who put the interests and needs of others before their own desires would belong to the Abnegation faction. This is the world of this week's book - a dystopian society in the imaginary future of the planet earth and it is a frightening place.

For such a society to exist, people at the age of sixteen must undergo a kind of psychological screening test where each person ultimately gets to choose the community in which he or she will live. In some cases this means forsaking family and this is exactly what the female protagonist of this book decides to do as she makes the huge shift in her life from passive obedience in the Abnegation faction in which she was born, to embracing a life of bravery and aggression in the Dauntless faction, the community she chooses. To some extent the book explores personality and whether it is imprinted in our psychology at birth or whether it is passed on to us through environmental factors. It explores the degree to which we can truly change our own human nature. The transformation of Tris from an obedient and passive young woman to a courageous and independent thinker is not sudden. Her metamorphosis is a gradual one and very believable. The author also examines what elements would be valuable in a new society built from the ruins of an old one. Can the differences that separate us as individuals come together to make a stronger whole? This story is propelled by those two little words that drive all excellent fiction – What if?

I liked this book because it made me think. The protagonist, a brave and smart woman, finds an equally brave and smart man and they both bring out the best in each other. It's a highly charged action/adventure romp, with a love story on the side. Who could ask for more?