

'Divergent' – campy sci-fi needs some work



By Jeremy Miller

I was pretty apprehensive about this one, but found myself somewhat pleasantly surprised by “Divergent”. Starring one of my favorite up and comers, Shailene Woodley, as the lead, I had enough reason to get to the theater and check it out.

Also starring we have Theo James, Kate Winslet, Jai Courtney and Miles Teller. Tris (Woodley) is a young member of society in futuristic Chicago that is divided into factions based on virtues. The youth of this “perfect” society hit an age at which they decide which faction they will spend the rest of their life serving and once they decide there’s no going back.

There is a test they take that “helps” them decide which faction they best fit. While taking her test Tris discovers that she’s a divergent: someone who doesn’t fit into any of the factions and if found out she’d be cast out or even worse, destroyed. She is forced to keep it a secret and on decision day decides against the faction of her parents and goes off on her own.



From there she's put through a gauntlet of rigorous training and initiation into her new faction. While doing so, she starts to uncover a plot to destroy any divergent and take control of all the factions that would turn the perfect society upside down. Along the way she finds comradery and self-conflict, and some serious counter effort from her peers and instructors.

I liked a lot of things about this flick. I must admit I actually loved the premise: A sci-fi coming of age flick that takes place in the future with hormones flying all over the place. It makes for a good time. I liked the characters and the twists and turns were fun and only somewhat predictable.

The special effects were mediocre at best, but not so bad that they drew away from the realism of it all.

Along the way Tris develops a thick and often awkward crush on her trainer, Four (James) that's both difficult and fun to watch. His mysterious demeanor and alpha bad-ass persona kept me involved and wanting to know more, but sometimes was outweighed by an overly cheesy script.

That brings me to my dislikes. The script was at some points unbearable. I was honestly conflicted at times. There were moments that I was really into it and cheering these guys along, and other times I could barely keep my eyes forward and watch the train wreck. The love scenes were pretty awful, about as out of sync as two boots in a dryer really.

But, like I said, overall I was entertained. It definitely sets up for a sequel and somehow I feel if they got some more seasoned sci-fi writers on the thing it could really be something awesome. For the first go around, they did a good

enough job to keep me in my seat from start to finish so I guess that counts for something. Overall, it's really nothing special, but it's a fun movie and if you go in with expectations of the cliché PG-13 campy romance battered sci-fi epic, then you'll get what you paid for and leave satisfied.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.