

The Divergent Series: 'Allegiant' – silly, drawn out sequel

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 18 March 2016 08:01



Rating: «« out of 4 stars

Running Time: 121 min.

The previous film in the series may not have been stellar, but it at least showed some promise for the next chapter by promising the characters will finally get out of their walled-in and cut-off existence. It may be due to the source material or the screenplay, but *The Divergent Series: Allegiant* never takes advantage of its potential. It's an even sillier follow-up to a series that was already straining credibility.

After receiving a message from beyond the walls of Chicago, Tris (Shailene Woodley)

is ready to investigate with beau Four (Theo James). However, there's still plenty of conflict going on. Rebel leader Evelyn (Naomi Watts) has taken control of the city and is just as violent as her predecessor, executing her enemies and disallowing anyone to travel outside the city walls. Realizing that her brother Caleb (Ansel Elgort) will soon be put to death, Tris plots his escape and breaks out of Chicago with a group of friends. Now outside the walls, she encounters a new faction called the Bureau of Genetic Welfare and befriends its leader, David (Jeff Daniels). But are David's motives altruistic?

One thing's for certain - after a while you likely won't care either way. From the reintroduction of old characters one can barely remember taking part in death trials (with a goofy chorus/angry mob shouting stilted comments during the proceedings), there isn't much to grab onto or any dramatic urgency early on. And sadly, once the characters manage to sneak themselves out

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beyond the city it doesn't become any more interesting.

Once could imagine all sorts of incredible and strange sci-fi scenery for Tris and her friends' to encounter as they travel to new lands. But while the characters do explore, beyond a few red rock landscapes it's only the same dilapidated factory sets and grey brick. It's dull and familiar looking. There's one additional site briefly glimpsed and strange flying crafts, but they are not well rendered. For a big movie, it just doesn't look up to snuff - the visual effects are reminiscent of (and don't even match) those from the *Star Wars* prequels.

While I disliked the original, I felt that the second film moved at a quick clip. That can't be said for this sequel, particularly during sequences at the Bureau of Genetic Welfare. There's a lot of lengthy exposition in the movie, so much so that part of it is delivered through a corporate video shown to the heroes (I can't imagine how long the isolated group must have waited to finally get some use out of their promo). Despite the gene talk and explanations as to why Chicago is walled in, none of it really makes a whole lot of sense.

The main source of interpersonal drama comes from Tris and Theo, who have their relationship tested as they disagree about the motives of their new hosts. The waffling becomes quite repetitious. So viewers will have to endure fights and break-ups, as well as one of the weirdest make-out sessions of any teen lit film adaptation. It occurs between the two as they stand over the unconscious and/or dead bodies of numerous enemy soldiers. Their love may know no bounds, but that still seems like a really inappropriate place to lock lips.

Admittedly, the finale does offer a reasonably imposing threat and a decent fight scene or two as a raid rages through the city. The character of Peter (Miles Teller) is still nothing more than a predictable heel for the protagonists, but he manages to work in a couple of sarcastic comments that hit the mark - at least this character is aware of how ridiculous the events occurring around him truly are.

And of course, absolutely nothing is resolved by the close. *The Divergent Series: Allegiant* is really something of a mess. It's a movie that doesn't take advantage of its concept. Instead, the screenplay delivers drawn-out babbling and lengthy explanations in a desperate attempt to develop additional conflict and tension. It doesn't accomplish its goal, nor does it provide much in the way of thrills. For the penultimate chapter in a popular series, this doesn't bode well for the finale.

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