

Shortage of Spark Makes ‘The Divergent Series: Insurgent’ a Second-String Effort

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 20, 2015 - 6:47am

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “The Divergent Series: Insurgent” does nothing to change the “Divergent” series status as an off brand Young Adult epic. As we’ve seen with “The Hunger Games,” these Young Adult franchises can be lots of fun and be faithful to their source material. But “Insurgent” has the same problem as the first two “Harry Potter” films – it’s too faithful, coupled with a dearth of inspiration behind the camera.

Director Robert Schwentke and screenwriters Akiva Goldsman, Mark Bomback, and Brian Duffield are more interested in playing it safe than in creating anything memorable. This series only lands glancing blows when its emotional arcs should lead to blockbuster knockouts.



Theo James, Miles Teller (center) and Shailene Woodley in ‘Insurgent’

Photo credit: Lionsgate

The movie keeps on moving, but narratively it never develops much momentum. The set pieces are competently staged, but nothing more. The special effects expensive, but repetitive. When the story comes to a fork in the road, the camera makes sure the decision is never really in doubt-lingering on the preferred outcome so as to telegraph to its audience it won’t be messing with them. Even when Four’s supposedly dead mom (Naomi Watts) shows up with the train riding futuristic hobos known as the “factionless” looking to lead a revolution, it doesn’t

pack much of a punch.

Part of the problem is the movie relies on the old “it’s only a dream” and it’s slightly higher tech variant “it’s only a simulation” at least half a dozen times in the first hour. This narrative tic stops the movie dead in its tracks each time and becomes more annoying than anything else. In the end, the film is just like its frequently used visual effect – it disintegrates on impact into a digital cloud of pixels that fades from memory as it simply drifts away on the gentle breeze.

“Insurgent” opens everywhere on March 20th. Featuring Shailene Woodley. Kate Winslet, Naomi Watts, Miles Teller, Theo James and Octavia Spencer. Screenplay adapted by Brian Duffield, Akiva Goldsman and Mark Bombeck, from the novel by Veronica Roth. Directed by Robert Schwentke. Rated “PG-13”



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