FADE IN:

EXT. RECREATION AREA - DAY

A burning-red apple flies through space. As the pristine orb draws its downward arc in the sky, it somehow loses its brilliant hue.

JONAS, 11, catches the apple and promptly inspects the odd fruit, squinting his pale eyes.

       ASHER (O.C.)
Toss it back, Jonas!

Twenty yards across from Jonas, a round-faced boy with unkept hair, ASHER, 11, waves his arms. Jonas heaves the apple back toward his playmate, who drops it on the ground as it arrives.

       JONAS
Asher, have you noticed anything strange about that apple?

       ASHER
That it keeps jumping out of my hands?

Asher retrieves the fruit and tosses it back to Jonas. Against the grey sky, the change happens again: just for a flickering second, that brilliant, burning red overtakes the black-and-white.

Just as Jonas catches the apple, a voice blares out from a speaker-box mounted on the nearby building structure:

       SPEAKER (V.O.)
The recreational period has ended.
Please return to your classrooms.

Immediately, obediently, Asher and the school of other children in the vicinity cease their games and start toward the building.

       ASHER
Come on, Jonas.

Jonas blinks over his pale irises in a fit. He stares nonplussed at the apple's now-grey skin. With classmates streaming by him, he furtively slips the fruit into a pocket on his tunic, and then trails his peers into the building.

CUT TO:

OPENING CREDITS: "THE GIVER"

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - NIGHT
Muted colors. Simple décor. Gathered around the dining table with Jonas is his strikingly vanilla family unit: FATHER, 30's, MOTHER, 30's, and little LILY, only 7.

They have just finished their evening meal.

FATHER
Who wants to be the first to share feelings tonight?

Lily wiggles in her seat with impatience.

JONAS
You go, Lily.

LILY
Um, I felt very angry this afternoon. My childcare group was at the play area, and we had a visiting group of Sevens, and they didn't obey the rules at all! One of them - a male, I don't know his name - kept going right in front of the line for the slide! I felt so angry at him, so I made my hand like this:

Lily squeezes her tiny hand into a defiant fist.

MOTHER
Why do you think the visitors didn't obey the rules?

LILY
I don't know.

FATHER
Where were the visitors from, Lily-billy?

LILY
Our leader told us, but I - I don't remember. I must not have been paying attention. They were from far. Another community.

3.

MOTHER
Do you think it’s possible that the rules in their community may just be different than our own?

LILY
I suppose.

JONAS
You've visited other communities, haven't you?

Lily nods.
FATHER
How did you feel there?

LILY
Strange. They were learning usages that my group wasn't yet, so we felt... stupid.

FATHER
I'm thinking, Lily, about the boy today. Do you think it's possible that he --

The speaker-box planted high in the corner of the dwelling blares on:

SPEAKER (V.O.)
Attention. This is a reminder to male elevens that objects are not to be removed from the recreation area, and that snacks are to be eaten, not hoarded.

Jonas shrinks in his seat. His family unit subtly peeks over at the desk in the adjoining living area, where the apple rests next to a magnifying glass.

Father breaks the painful silence:

FATHER
Lily, do you think it's possible that the boy simply felt strange, being in a place he knew nothing about?

LILY
Yes.

FATHER
Are you still angry?

LILY
I guess not. I guess I feel a little sorry for him. And sorry I made a fist.

FATHER
Well, then. I have a concern at work. One of the newchildren in the Nurturing Center was born undersized.

LILY
What gender is it?

FATHER
Male. He's a lovely little male, but he isn't growing as fast as he should, and he doesn't sleep soundly. We have him in the extra
care section for supplemental nurturing, but the committee is beginning to talk about releasing him.

MOTHER
Oh, no. I know how sad that must make you feel.

Jonas and Lily nod sympathetically.

FATHER
Well, I'm going to keep trying. I may ask the committee for permission to bring him here at night. You know what the night-crew Nurturers are like. I think this little guy needs something extra.

MOTHER
Of course.

LILY
Maybe we could even keep him.

MOTHER
Lily, you know the rules.

LILY
Well...

Lily simpers. Mother grins.

FATHER
Jonas, you're up.

Jonas clears his throat and takes his time to find the correct words.

JONAS
I-I'm feeling... apprehensive.

FATHER
Why is that, son?

JONAS
I know there's nothing really to worry about, and that every adult has been through it. But it's the Ceremony I'm apprehensive about. It's almost December.

Little Lily whispers in awe:

LILY
The Ceremony of Twelve.

MOTHER
Lily, go get into your
nightclothes now. Father and I are going to stay here and talk to Jonas for a while.

LILY
Privately?

Mother nods. Lily reluctantly scampers off.

FATHER
(to Jonas)
I'm glad you told us your feelings. You know, every December was exciting to me when I was young, too. Each one brings such changes.

MOTHER
(to Father)
But, to be honest, for you there wasn't the element of suspense that there is with Jonas' Ceremony.

FATHER
Well, no. I was already fairly certain of what my Assignment would be.

JONAS
But didn't the Elders select in secret? How could you have known?

FATHER
Well, it was pretty clear what my aptitude was. I spent almost all my volunteer hours in the Nurturing Center. Of course the Elders knew that, from their observation. So I expected it, and was pleased, but not surprised, when my Assignment was announced as Nurturer.

MOTHER
Yes, and I wasn't all that surprised when they announced my Assignment in the Department of Justice either.

JONAS
Did the community still applaud even though they weren't surprised?

Father shoots Jonas a warm smirk.

FATHER
Of course. The selections are very rarely big surprises. What's
important is the preparation
you'll receive for your adult
life.

JONAS
I know. Everyone knows that. I
just don't know where the Elders
might decide to place me.

Mother reassuringly reaches across the table and places her
hand atop Jonas'.

MOTHER
There are very rarely
disappointments, Jonas. There's no
need to feel apprehensive.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

The furnishing is sparse: a bed in one corner, a desk in the
other. Jonas pulls a wool blanket over himself in bed.

EXT. JONAS' DWELLING - NIGHT

Father sets a tidy bag of waste outside the front door.

INT. FATHER & MOTHER'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

There are two separate beds. Mother sits on the edge of hers
and pops a small pill into her mouth, downing it with a
glass of water.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Father twists open a medicine bottle and ingests the same
type of tablet.

INT. LILY'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

Lily tosses and turns in bed, hugging a stuffed animal of an
elephant.

EXT. AREA OF DWELLINGS - NIGHT

Night-crew workers bustle about the clusters of uniform
homes, collecting waste bags, sweeping pathways, operating
flat-beds, or performing speaker-box maintenance.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas falls fast asleep in a world of black-and-white.
INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Jonas sits perfectly upright in a desk amongst his similarly upright peers, as an instructor delivers a presentation on a view-screen at the head of the classroom. The screen displays schematics for a small airplane.

INSTRUCTOR
Inside, every search plane contains a screen on the front panel, where blurs of heat show up as smears on the radar.

Jonas' eyes stray across the room to a girl seated on the other side: FIONA, 11. She has light, flowing hair, and a tragic, innocent face.

INSTRUCTOR (cont'd)
The sensors on the plane's exterior trace the warm object and show it to the pilot, who sends word down to the search parties to investigate. This way, the lost can always be rescued in the unlikely event --

Asher bursts through the classroom door, panting for air. He dashes to his desk, right next to Jonas.

ASHER
(to the class)
I apologize for inconveniencing my learning community. I left home at the correct time but, when I was along near the hatchery, the crew was separating some salmon. I guess I just got distraught, watching them.

His classmates struggle not to laugh.

THE CLASS
We accept you apology, Asher.

INSTRUCTOR
And I thank you, Asher, because once again you have provided an opportunity for a lesson in language. "Distraught" is too strong an adjective.

The instructor scrawls "DISTRACTED" next to the word "DISTRAUGHT" on the board. The immature class titters, as Asher sinks into his desk.

9.

EXT. JONAS' DWELLING - DAY
Father parks his bicycle in a row of bikeports outside the dwelling. Lily rushes over as he unstraps the carrying basket from the back of the bike.

LILY
Oh, look! He's here! Isn't he cute? Look how tiny he is! And he has funny eyes like yours, Jonas!

Jonas approaches the commotion, glaring at his sister. Father rebukes Lily with his tone:

FATHER
Lily!

LILY
(to Jonas)
I'm sorry for being rude.

JONAS
I accept your apology, Lily.

LILY
But look how cute!

Inside the basket lay the precious NEWCHILD, no more than a few months old. The baby has pale, solemn eyes, akin to those of Jonas.

LILY
Maybe he had the same birthmother as you, Jonas.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

Father places a document filled with text and four lines for signature on the studying desk.

FATHER
We must all sign this pledge promising not to become attached to our temporary guest. My plea for the newchild was accepted by the committee this afternoon.

Father's produces a fountain pen and signs on a line.

FATHER (cont'd)
He has been labeled as Uncertain, and granted an extra year of nurturing before his Naming and Placement. That is, assuming he is able to reach the special set of weight and maturity standards that the committee has agreed upon.
The rest of the family unit form a queue to add their signatures.

FATHER (cont'd)
From now on, the newchild will spend every night with our family unit, so that I may nurture him to the best of my abilities. But we must agree to relinquish him, without protest or appeal, at next year's Ceremony when he is assigned a family unit of his own.

TIME CUT

Father, Mother, and Lily hover over the infant. Jonas busies himself with schoolwork at the desk, feigning disinterest in the newchild.

LILY
I think newchildren are so cute.
When I become a twelve, I hope I get assigned to be a Birthmother.

MOTHER
Lily! Don't say that. There's very little honor in that Assignment.

LILY
But Natasha, the Ten who lives down the street, does most of her volunteer hours at the Birthing Center. She told me that the Birthmothers get wonderful food, they have gentle exercise periods, and most of the time they just play games while they're waiting. I think I'd enjoy that.

MOTHER
Lily, for the relatively short period of their lives that they're actually allowed to bear newchildren, that's true. But it doesn't last. When it's decided that their time is up in the Birthing Center, they all become simple Laborers in the Community (MORE)

11.

MOTHER (cont'd)
until they enter the House of the Old.

FATHER
Anyway, Lily-billy, Birthmothers never even get to see newchildren. If you enjoy the little ones so much, you should hope for an Assignment as Nurturer, like me.
MOTHER
When you're an Eight and you start
your volunteer hours, you can try
some at the Nurturing Center.

FATHER
Speaking of the Nurturing Center,
I took a peek at the committee's
advance list of names for next
Ceremony's newchildren while I was
there today.

LILY
Father!

FATHER
I know, I feel a little guilty.
But I figured it would help in his
nurturing if I could call the
little guy by a name.

MOTHER
What is it?

FATHER
His name - if he makes it to the
Naming without being released, of
course - is set to be Gabriel.

LILY
Baby Gabriel.

FATHER
I call him Gabe, actually. I
whisper it to him if no one else
is around.

Jonas finishes his schoolwork. He snatches the dictionary
from the desk's top shelf, and opens it to the middle of
section K. His clear eyes fall upon the word "knowledge."

IMPACT CUT TO:

EXT. RECREATIONAL AREA - DAY
The burning-red apple soars high against the black-and-white
sky. The color dissipates as the flung fruit turns downward
on its path.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - LIVING AREA - NIGHT
Jonas slams the dictionary shut. Father waves a stuffed
animal over Gabe.

LILY
What's his comfort object called?
FATHER

Hippo.

Lily giggles.

LILY

Hippo? What a strange word. Hippo! Hippo!

EXT. CENTRAL PLAZA - DAY

Light bicycle traffic livens the plaza. Jonas rides through at a brisk pace. He passes neat rows of sizable building structures.

EXT. THE BRIDGE - DAY

Jonas pedals over a classic cobblestone bridge with still, black water pooled beneath it.

EXT. THE HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Jonas stations his bicycle beside two others in the bikeports before the building.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A smiling female receptionist awaits. Enter Jonas.

RECEPTIONIST

Hello, Jonas.

He approaches the receptionist's desk and signs into a thick binder. She stamps the signature with an ink seal.

RECEPTIONIST

It's good to have some volunteers here today. We celebrated a release this morning, and that always throws the schedule off a little, so things tend to get backed up.

The receptionist scans another sheet of paper.

RECEPTIONIST

Let's see. Asher and Fiona are in the bathing room. Why don't you join them there?

INT. BATHING ROOM - DAY

Thick clouds of steam waft through the area. Serene sounds of dripping and splashing liquid arrest the room. Jonas quickly trades his tunic for a smock at a changing station.
Jonas advances into the room and spots Asher washing one of the Old in a tub. Fiona is at work outside the adjacent tub, gently bathing an old man. The young groupmates exchange smiles and nods.

Jonas approaches a row of padded lounging chairs where the Old are waiting. He stops in front of an elderly woman:

JONAS
Your turn, Larissa.

Jonas escorts the woman to one of the many tubs, which automatically fills with warm water. LARISSA sheds her robe. Jonas helps her into the tub.

JONAS
Comfortable?

Jonas squeezes cleansing lotion over Larissa's frail body. He peeks over at Fiona and catches her tenderly patting the old man's naked body with an absorbent towel.

LARISSA
This morning we celebrated the release of Roberto. It was wonderful.

JONAS
I knew Roberto! I helped with his feeding the last time I was here, just a few weeks ago. He was a very interesting man.

LARISSA
Oh, yes. They told his whole life before they released him. They always do, but, to be honest, some of the tellings are a little boring. When they released Edna last week - Did you know Edna?

Jonas shakes his head and squeezes out his sponge.

LARISSA
They tried to make her life sound meaningful - and all lives are meaningful, of course - but Edna was a birthmother, my goodness. Then she worked in Food Production for years before coming here. She never even had a family unit. I don't think Edna was very smart.

Jonas snickers at Larissa's appraisal of Edna, as he rinses the soaps suds from her chest.
LARISSA
But Roberto's was wonderful. He had been an Instructor, on the planning committee. He even raised two wonderful children. Goodness, I don't know how he found the time.

JONAS
What happens when they make the actual release? Where did Roberto actually go?

LARISSA
Oh, I don't know. I don't think anybody does, except the committee. He just bowed to all of us and walked through the special door in the Releasing Room, like they all do. But you should have seen his look. Pure happiness.

JONAS
I wish I'd been there to see it.

Jonas steals another glance at Fiona.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - DAY
Jonas awakens from his slumber with a devilish smile plastered across his face.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - DAY
The family unit is still gathered around the table after their morning meal.

LILY
And then they caught me! And that's how it ended.

MOTHER
Thank you for your dream, Lily.

Mother looks to Father.

FATHER
I have no dream to report from last night. I don't remember dreaming. Gabe?

Father looks to the fidgeting newchild, jokingly expecting him to continue the family dream sharing. The whole unit laughs respectfully.

MOTHER
How about you, Jonas?
JONAS
I did dream last night.

FATHER
Good. Tell us.

Jonas shifts in his chair.

JONAS
The details aren't clear, really. I think I was in the bathing room at the House of the Old.

INT. BATHING ROOM - DAY

The room is wrapped in an endless haze, filled with copious amounts of piping-hot steam.

16.

FATHER (O.S.)
That's where you were yesterday.

JONAS (O.S.)
But it wasn't really the same. There was a tub in the dream, but only one.

The single tub is there, spilling over with water.

JONAS (O.S.)
Everything was warm and damp. And I had taken off my tunic, but hadn't put on my smock, so my chest was bare.

Jonas, half-nude, approaches the tub.

JONAS (O.S.)
I was perspiring, because it was so warm. And Fiona was there, the way she was yesterday.

Fiona appears, fully clothed. She laughs at Jonas.

MOTHER (O.S.)
And Asher, too?

JONAS (O.S.)
No. It was only me and Fiona, alone in the room. She was laughing, but I wasn't. I was almost a little angry at her in the dream, because it seemed like she wasn't taking me seriously.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - DAY

Mother and Father lean in to absorb Jonas' words.
LILY
Serious about what?

Jonas struggles with the concept.

JONAS
I think I was trying to convince her that she should get into the water. I wanted to take her clothes off and get into the tub.

MOTHER
That's all?

JONAS
I wanted to bathe her. I had the sponge in my hand. But she wouldn't. She kept laughing and saying no.

FATHER
Can you describe the strongest feeling in your dream, son?

Jonas gathers his thoughts.

JONAS
The wanting. I knew she wouldn't, and I knew that she shouldn't. But I wanted it so terribly.

MOTHER
Thank you for your dream, Jonas.

Mother glances at Father.

FATHER
Lily, it's time to leave for school. Would you walk beside me this morning and keep an eye on the newchild's basket? We want to be certain he doesn't wiggle himself loose.

Jonas collects his schoolbooks. Father and Lily scoop up Gabe in his basket and head out the front door.

MOTHER
Wait, Jonas. I'll write an apology to your instructor so that you won't have to speak for being late.

Jonas retakes his seat, his face a mask of apprehension.

MOTHER
Jonas, the feeling you described as the wanting? It was your first Stirrings. Father and I have been expecting it to happen to you for
some time. It happens to everyone. It happened to Father when he was your age, and it happened to me, too. It will happen to Lily one day. And very often. For the rest (MORE)

18.

MOTHER (cont'd)
of your life.

JONAS
Do I have to report it?

Mother laughs lightly at Jonas' concern.

MOTHER
You did. The dream-telling was enough.

JONAS
Well, what happens? Am I going to have to go away for treatment right before the ceremony?

Mother reaches out to establish physical contact with her son.

MOTHER
No, no, it's just the pills. You're ready for the pills, that's all. That's the treatment for Stirrings.

Mother flashes a reassuring smile for Jonas.

TIME CUT
A single pill from Mother's medicine bottle rests in Jonas' palm. It appears as a small, benign capsule. He inserts it into his orifice and swallows.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - LIVING AREA - DAY
Mother ties ceremonial ribbons around Lily's braids. Jonas adjusts his formal tunic in the background.

MOTHER
Lily, hold still.

The little girl fidgets with the front buttons on her jacket.

LILY
I don't like the ribbons. I'm glad I only have to wear them one more year. Then, next year, I get my bicycle, too.
JONAS
There are good things each year,
Lily. You start your volunteer
hours after tonight's ceremony.

LILY
And this year, you get your
Assignment. I hope you get Pilot,
and that you take me flying!

Mother finishes the ribbon arrangement with a final tug.

MOTHER
Come on. I want to get a good seat
in the Auditorium.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Countless bicycles roll up to a never-ending row of
bikeports outside the grand entry doors. Jonas rides his own
bike, and Lily rides on Mother's back seat.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Asher and Jonas take their assigned seats in a balcony with
their groupmates, the Elevens. Jonas scans the packed
auditorium. Every citizen of the community is in attendance.

The lights dim over the seats and brighten around center
stage. A line of Nuturers, Jonas' father among them, march
onto the stage with infants squirming in their arms.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
The Naming.

A new mother and father walk across the stage and accept a
newchild from one of the Nurturers.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
Female. Clementine.

Light applause. The new parents take their daughter
Clementine off stage. The next parents in line are those of
Fiona. She accompanies them across stage as they accept a
baby boy.

SPEAKER (V.O.)

Fiona's family unit exits the stage to the audience's
robotic applause. The next parents in line also receive a
boy.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
Male. Roberto.
TIME CUT

SPEAKER (V.O.)
The Eights.
The former seven-year-olds of the community, little Lily among them, march proudly across the stage and become Eights. They are issued brand-new jackets.

Fiona joins her groupmates in the balcony.

JONAS
New brother!

FIONA
He's cute, but I don't like his name very much. Bruno.

Fiona makes a face and smiles at Jonas.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
The Nines.

INT. AUDITORIUM - EATING HALL - DAY
A geometric hall filled with all the community's children.
Jonas and Asher eat at a table across from each other.

ASHER
I heard about a guy who was absolutely certain he was going to be assigned Engineer, and instead they gave him Sanitation Laborer. The next day he jumped into the river, swam across, and joined the next community he came to. No one ever saw him again.

JONAS
Somebody made that story up, Ash. My father said he heard that story when he was a Twelve.

ASHER
I don't know, Jonas.

JONAS
Asher, have you ever once heard of anyone - and I mean for sure, not just some story - who joined another community?

ASHER
No. But you can. It says so in the rules. If you don't fit in, you just apply for Elsewhere and get released. My mother once threatened that she was going to
apply for release, because I was driving her crazy.

JONAS
She was joking.

ASHER
I know, but it was true what she was saying. Here today, gone tomorrow. She said anyone could really just apply for release. Never seen again.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
This is the conclusion of the meal break. Please return to the auditorium for the Ceremony of Twelve.

Immediately, the crowd in the eating hall obediently moves toward the exit doors.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jonas and his groupmates file into the seats immediately before the stage. They are assigned in a specific order, placing Jonas and Fiona right next to each other and Asher one row ahead of them.

An older, regal-looking woman ascends the stage to address the masses. This is the community's CHIEF ELDER.

CHIEF ELDER
This is the time when we acknowledge differences. You Elevens have spent all your years till now learning to fit in, to standardize your behavior, to curb any impulse that might set you apart from the group. But today we honor your differences, for they (MORE)

CHIEF ELDER (cont'd)
have determined your futures. This year's group is yet another gift to our community, and our Committee of Elders has done an excellent job of placing them all.

The audience applauds the Committee of Elders, an assembly of old bones perched together in their own dark balcony.

CHIEF ELDER
Let us begin. Number One. Madeline.

The first new Twelve in Jonas' group, MADELINE, steps nervously onto the stage.
CHIEF ELDER
Fish Hatchery Attendant.

The crowd applauds her Assignment.

TIME CUT

CHIEF ELDER
Number Four. Asher.

Asher clambers up the stage.

CHIEF ELDER
Assistant Director of Recreation.

A MONTAGE OF TIME CUTS runs down the list of Twelves. Numbers accompanied by titles such as "Birthmother" and "Laborer" are spouted by the Chief Elder. Twelves return to their seats with new badges on their tunics and thick folders in their arms. END MONTAGE.

CHIEF ELDER
Number Eighteen. Fiona.

Fiona ascends the stage.

CHIEF ELDER
Caretaker of the Old.

Fiona accepts her badge and folder from the Chief Elder. Jonas nudges her as she returns to her seat beside him.

CHIEF ELDER
Number Twenty.

The crowd is suddenly hushed. Jonas, in seat nineteen, rises an inch out of his chair, then quickly sets back down.

CHIEF ELDER (cont'd)
Pierre.

The boy to Jonas' right, PIERRE, hesitates, then rises out of the seat marked twenty. His feet are heavy as he works his way up the stage. Groupmates around Jonas glance at him, then quickly avert their eyes. Jonas sinks down in his seat.

TIME CUT

CHIEF ELDER
Number Twenty-three.

TIME CUT

CHIEF ELDER
Number Twenty-seven.

TIME CUT

CHIEF ELDER
Number Thirty.
TIME CUT

The Chief Elder hands the last boy, MARTIN, his folder, and pins a badge to his tunic.

CHIEF ELDER
Martin, thank you for your childhood.

Soulless applause from the crowd. Murmurs zip through the auditorium.

CHIEF ELDER
I know that you are all concerned. I have caused you anxiety. I apologize to my community.

COMMUNITY
We accept your apology.

The tension in the crowd quells.

CHIEF ELDER
Jonas, I apologize to you in particular. I caused you anguish.

JONAS
I accept your apology.

CHIEF ELDER
Please come to the stage now.

Jonas wills himself up the stage without the tame applause of his dumbstruck community. The Chief Elder places her arm reassuringly around his tense shoulders.

CHIEF ELDER
Jonas has not been assigned. He has been selected.

The audience stirs, confused.

CHIEF ELDER
Jonas has been selected to be our next Receiver of Memory.

One sharp, collective gasp pops from the crowd. They stare up at Jonas, mouths agape.

CHIEF ELDER
Such a selection is very, very rare. Our community only has one Receiver, and it is he who trains his successor. We have had our current Receiver for a very long time.

Jonas' eyes dart up toward the dark balcony. Perched among the other Elders is one man who seems oddly separate. He is
ancient and bearded, with a pair of solemn, pale eyes that
stare right into Jonas. He is THE GIVER.

CHIEF ELDER (cont'd)
We failed in our last selection. It was ten years ago, when Jonas
was just a toddler. But I will not
dwell on the experience, because
it causes us all terrible
discomfort. We have not been hasty
this time. We could not afford
another failure. The
Receiver-in-training cannot be
observed, cannot be modified. That
is stated quite clearly in the
rules. He is to be alone, apart,
while he is prepared by the
current Receiver for the job which
is most honored in our community.
This selection was a unanimous
choice of the Committee. Jonas was
(MORE)

25.

CHIEF ELDER (cont'd)
identified as a possible Receiver
many years ago. We have observed
him meticulously. There were no
dreams of uncertainty.

The Chief Elder turns to Jonas.

CHIEF ELDER
Jonas, the training required of
you involves pain. Physical pain.
You have never experienced that.
Yes, you have scraped your knees
falling off your bicycle. Yes, you
crushed your finger in a door last
year. But you will be faced now
with pain of a magnitude that none
of us here can comprehend, because
it is beyond our experience. We
cannot prepare you for that, but
we feel certain that you are
brave. Finally, the Receiver spoke
of a quality, and it is one I can
only name, but not describe. None
of us here will understand it, but
perhaps Jonas will. The Receiver
told us that Jonas has a quality.
The capacity to see beyond.

Jonas casts his pale eyes over the paralyzed audience.
Shades of pink dance on their skin, but only in flashes, and
only for a moment.

CHIEF ELDER
Jonas, you will be trained to
become our next Receiver of
Memory. We thank you for your
childhood.
The Chief Elder leaves the stage. The entire community rises to its feet, and chants:

COMMUNITY
Jonas, Jonas, Jonas...

Now louder and faster:

COMMUNITY
Jonas! Jonas! Jonas!

EXT. AREA OF DWELLINGS - NIGHT

Jonas' family unit parks their bicycles outside their dwelling.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - NIGHT

The family unit is gathered around the table for dinner.

MOTHER
You've been greatly honored, Jonas. Your father and I are very proud.

FATHER
It's the most important job in the community.

JONAS
But I thought you said the job of making Assignments was the most important.

MOTHER
This is different. It's not a job, really. I never thought - Never expected... There's only been one Receiver in my lifetime.

JONAS
But the Chief Elder said that they had made a selection before, and that it failed. What was she talking about?

Mother and Father shift uncomfortably in their seats.

MOTHER
That's right. It happened very much as it happened today. One of the Elevens --

JONAS
What was his name?
MOTHER
Her name. Not his, it was a female. But we are never to speak the name, or use it again for a newchild.

---

JONAS
What happened to her?

MOTHER
We don't know. We never saw her again.

The family continues eating their rudimentary paste.

FATHER
You've been greatly honored, Jonas. Greatly honored.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT
Jonas sits at his desk and considers the cover of the folder he was given at the auditorium. He cracks it open.

INT. FIONA'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT
Fiona sits at her desk, buried beneath a thick packet of papers in her Assignment folder.

INT. ASHER'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT
Asher is slumped across his bed, flipping through a heavy stack of printed pages.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT
As Jonas opens his folder, a single sheet of paper floats out and lands on his desk. It reads:

THE GIVER (V.O.)
One: Go immediately at the end of school hours each day to the Annex entrance behind the House of the Old and present yourself to the attendant. Two: Go immediately to your dwelling at the end of Training Hours each day. Three: From this moment you are exempted from rules governing rudeness. You may ask any question of any citizen and you will receive answers. Four: Do not discuss your training with any other member of the community, including parents and Elders. Five: From this moment
THE GIVER (cont'd)
dream-telling. Six: Except for illness or injury unrelated to your training, do not apply for any medication. Seven: You are not permitted to apply for release. Eight: You may lie.

Jonas, stunned, reads it again.

INT. FATHER & MOTHER'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT
Mother swallows her pill for the Stirrings.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - BATHROOM - NIGHT
Father twists open a bottle and ingests his nightly pill.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT
Jonas washes down his pill with water.

EXT. THE HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY
Jonas and Fiona stroll up to the entrance, carrying their folders.

FIONA
I go in here, Jonas. I don't know why I'm so nervous, I've been here so often before.

Fiona gives Jonas a radiant smile.

JONAS
I understand. Everything is so different now.

FIONA
Yes. Well, I don't want to be late. If we finish at the same time, I'll ride home with you?

JONAS
Of course.

EXT. ANNEX - DAY
Jonas punches a buzzer on the door. A voice emanates from a speaker on the building:
VOICE FROM SPEAKER (V.O.)
Yes?

JONAS
It's, uh, Jonas. I'm the new -- I mean --

VOICE FROM SPEAKER (V.O.)
Come in.
The heavy door clicks open.

INT. ANNEX LOBBY - DAY
Jonas walks up to a female ATTENDANT behind a desk. As soon as she sees Jonas, she respectfully rises to her feet.

ATTENDANT
Welcome, Receiver of Memory.

JONAS
Oh, please. Call me Jonas.

The attendant smiles at Jonas, then presses a button at her desk that triggers a door down the hall to unlock with a loud CLICK.

ATTENDANT
You may go right on in.

Jonas looks at her, shocked.

ATTENDANT
The locks are simply to ensure the Receiver's privacy. It would be difficult if citizens wandered in, looking for the Department of Bicycle Repair, or something.

Jonas laughs, relaxing a little.

ATTENDANT
There is nothing dangerous here, but he doesn't like to be kept waiting.

Jonas hurries down the hall and through the unlocked door.

30.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY
Jonas enters the room and freezes in his tracks. The standard desk, table, and bed are present, but their craftsmanship is strikingly more ornate than the norm.

Thick, luxurious fabrics cover the furniture; the bed frame is decorated oak; all four walls are bookcases, packed from ceiling to floor with countless volumes.
Jonas quickly snaps out of his stare, as he notices the Giver watching him from his seat across the room. Jonas steps toward him and bows slightly.

JONAS
I'm Jonas.

THE GIVER
I know. Welcome, Receiver of Memory.

Jonas stares at the Giver's pale eyes for a BEAT.

JONAS
Sir, I apologize for my lack of understanding . . .

The Giver remains silent, still . . .

JONAS
. . . But I thought - I mean I think that you are the Receiver of Memory. I'm only, well, I was only assigned, I mean selected, yesterday. I'm not anything at all. Not yet.

The Giver collects his thoughts.

THE GIVER
Beginning today, this moment, at least to me, you are the Receiver. I have been the Receiver for a very long time. A very long time. You can see that can't you?

JONAS
I can see that you are very old.

The Giver smiles and strokes his beard.

THE GIVER
I am not, actually, as old as I look. This job has aged me. I know I look as if I should be scheduled for release very soon, but I actually have a good deal of time left. I was pleased, though, when you were selected. It took them a long time. The failure of the previous selection was ten years ago, and my energy is starting to diminish. I need what strength I have remaining for your training. We have painful work to do, you and I. Please sit down.
Jonas lowers himself onto the elegant cushioning of a nearby chair. The Giver holds his tired eyes closed, then abruptly snaps them open.

THE GIVER
You may ask questions. I have so little experience in describing this process. It is forbidden to talk of it. I may neglect to make things as clear as I should, so feel free to ask me anything that may help you.

Jonas searches his mind, then shrugs his shoulders.

THE GIVER
Simply stated, although it's not really simple at all, my job is to transmit to you all the memories I have within me --

JONAS
-- Sir, I would be very interested to hear the story of your life and to listen to your memories. I apologize for interrupting.

THE GIVER
No apologies in this room. We haven't time.

JONAS
Well, I am interested, I don't mean that I'm not, but I don't exactly understand why it's so important. I could do some adult job in the community, and in my recreation time I could come and (MORE)

JONAS (cont'd)
listen to the stories from your childhood. I'd like that. Actually, I al--

THE GIVER
-- No, no, no. I'm not being clear. It's not my past that I must transmit to you. It's the memories of the whole world, Jonas. Before you, before me, before the previous Receiver, and generations before him.

Jonas takes a second to think before he responds.

JONAS
I - I don't understand. I'm sorry, sir. Do you mean not just the community? Do you mean Elsewhere, too? I'm sorry, maybe
I'm not smart enough. I don't know what you mean when you say those things. I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now.

THE GIVER
There's much more. There's all that goes beyond - all that is Elsewhere - and all that goes back, and back, and back. I received all of those when I was selected, and here in this room, all alone, I re-experience them again and again. It is how wisdom comes. And how we shape our future. I am so weighted with them.

The Giver pauses to rest. Jonas looks at him with genuine concern.

THE GIVER
It's as if . . . It's like going downhill through snow on a sled. At first it's exhilarating: the speed; the sharp, clear air; but then the snow accumulates, builds up on the runners, and you slow, you have to push hard to keep going, and . . .

The Giver shakes his head and scans Jonas.

THE GIVER
That meant nothing to you, did it?

JONAS
I didn't understand it, sir.

THE GIVER
Of course you didn't. You don't know what snow is, do you?

Jonas shakes his head.

THE GIVER
Or a sled? Runners?

JONAS
No, sir.

THE GIVER
Really? The terms mean nothing to you? Not even . . .

JONAS
. . . Nothing, sir.
THE GIVER
Well, it's a place to start. I'd been wondering how to begin. Move to the bed, and lie face down. Remove your tunic first.

Jonas rises from his seat, removes his tunic, and places himself face down on the Giver's bed.

The Giver moves to a speaker-box on the wall and deftly switches it OFF. He stations himself in a seat beside Jonas.

THE GIVER
Close your eyes. Relax. This will not be painful.

JONAS
What are you going to do, sir?

THE GIVER
I am going to transmit the memory of snow.

The Giver places his hands firmly on Jonas' bare back. After an anxious moment, Jonas begins to SHIVER and his teeth begin to CHATTER.

EXT. SNOWY HILL - NIGHT
Jonas, eyes closed, sits atop a sled on the peak of a towering mound of powdery snow. He sticks out his tongue and smiles as he catches the gentle snowflakes drifting down from the black sky.

Jonas reaches down and picks up the sled's damp rope, as the swirling crystals accumulate on his body.

He snaps his eyes open, and the sled tips forward and begins racing down the hill.

The runners cut rapidly through the frost, jetting Jonas downward, faster and faster. The young boy smiles in ecstasy, as the wind whips wildly against his face.

As Jonas reaches the bottom of the hill and the incline disappears, snow accumulates beneath the runners, and the sled comes to a slow stop.

Jonas thrusts his body forward on the sled, trying to force the ride to commence.

BACK TO THE GIVER'S ROOM
The Giver pulls his hands from the boy's back, and Jonas' eyes flutter open.

THE GIVER
How do you feel?
JONAS
Surprised.

Jonas sits up on the bed.

THE GIVER
It was exhausting. But you know, even transmitting that tiny memory to you . . . I think it lightened me just a little.

JONAS
Do you mean - Did you say I could ask questions?

The Giver nods enthusiastically.

35.

JONAS
Do you mean that now you no longer have that memory?

THE GIVER
That's right. A little weight off this old body.

JONAS
But it was such fun! And I took it from you!

THE GIVER
All I gave you was one ride, on one sled, in one snow, on one hill. I have a whole world of them in my memory. I could give them to you one by one, a thousand times, and there would still be more.

JONAS
Are you saying that I - I mean that we could do it again? I'd really like to. I think I could steer by pulling the rope. I didn't know to try this time.

THE GIVER
Maybe another day, for a treat. But there's no time, really, just to play. I only wanted to begin by showing you how it works. Now, lie back down. I want--

-- Jonas hops belly-first onto the bed.

JONAS
Why don't we have snow, and sleds, and hills? And when did we, in the past? Did my parents have
sleds when they were young? Did you?

THE GIVER
No. It's a very distant memory. That's why it was so exhausting. I had to tug it forward from many generations back.

JONAS
But what happened to those things? The snow and the rest of it?

THE GIVER
Climate Control. Snow made growing food difficult, limited the agricultural periods. And unpredictable weather made transportation impossible at times. It wasn't a practical thing, so it became obsolete when we went to Sameness. The hills made conveyance of goods unwieldy, and so . . . Sameness.

JONAS
I wish we had those things, still. Just now and then.

THE GIVER
So do I. But that choice is not ours.

JONAS
But, sir, since you have so much power--

THE GIVER
-- Honor. I have great honor, and one day so will you. That's not the same as power. Lie quietly now. Let me give you something else. And this time I'm not going to tell you the name of it, because I want to test the receiving. I gave away snow and sled the first time, but you should be able to perceive the name without being told a word.

The Giver places his hands on the boy's back.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Jonas, outstretched on the sand, soaks up the sunshine. He smiles at the warmth. Then, as the bright rays beat down on his body, he winces and touches his skin.
BACK TO THE GIVER'S ROOM

Jonas sits up, wincing in discomfort. He touches the skin on his neck.

JONAS

It's - it's a sunburn. It hurts a lot.

THE GIVER

I started you out with pleasure. My previous failure gave me the wisdom to do that. You must understand . . . It will be painful, Jonas.

JONAS

I understand.

THE GIVER

Get up, now. You may return home; that's enough for the first day. You were in the memories longer than you realize. We'll do much longer sessions in the future.

Jonas gets off the bed and puts his tunic back on.

JONAS

Goodbye, sir. Thank you for my first day.

The Giver nods. Jonas moves to leave, but then:

JONAS

Sir?

THE GIVER

Do you have a question?

JONAS

It's just that I don't know your name. You say now I'm the Receiver, so I don't know what to call you.

The old man shifts his aching shoulders around in his plush chair.

THE GIVER

Call me The Giver.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas lies asleep in bed, bundled beneath his blanket, with a satisfied smile on his face.
EXT. SNOWY HILL - NIGHT

On the sled, Jonas zips down the hill.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - DAY

The family unit is having their morning meal together.

MOTHER
   . . . And you slept soundly, Jonas? No dreams?

Jonas smiles to himself.

JONAS
   I slept very soundly.

FATHER
   Well, I wish this one would.

Father points to Gabriel, who is situated in his basket on the floor, COOING at and playing with his stuffed hippo.

MOTHER
   So do I. He's been so fretful at night.

The newchild giggles at his stuffed animal, then sneezes adorably.

EXT. THE HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Jonas and Fiona pedal up to the building together.

FIONA
   I looked for you yesterday, so we could ride home together. Your bike was still there, and I waited for a little while. But it was getting late, so I went on home.

JONAS
   I apologize for making you wait.

FIONA
   I accept your apology.

JONAS
   I stayed a little longer than I expected.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE. They pedal onward.
JONAS
You've been doing so many
volunteer hours with the Old.
There won't be much that you don't
already know.

FIONA
Oh, there's lots to learn. There's
administrative work, dietary
rules, punishment for disobedience
- did you know they use the same
discipline wand on the Old, the
same as for small children? And
there's occupational therapy, and
medications, and . . . I think I
like it a lot better than school.

JONAS
Me, too.

They hit their brakes as they reach the designated bike
ports.

Jonas and Fiona stare at each other for an awkward BEAT,
then:

FIONA
Goodbye.

They wave goodbye. Fiona spins away from Jonas and hurries
through the building's front entrance.

As she turns away, in her haste, her long locks of hair flip
up into the air before falling back around her shoulders. In
mid-air, the strands of Fiona's hair adopt a PASSIONATE RED
HUE. But only for a second.

She disappears behind the entrance, and a bewildered Jonas
moves on.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY

Jonas enters the room. The Giver smiles at him.

THE GIVER
Welcome. We must get started.
You're one minute late.

JONAS
I apologi--

Jonas cuts himself off, then removes his tunic and moves to
the bed.

JONAS
I'm one minute late, because
something happened. And I'd like
to ask you about it, if you don't
mind.
THE GIVER
You may ask me anything.

JONAS
I think it's what you call "seeing beyond."

THE GIVER
Describe it.

JONAS
Just now, outside, it happened with my friend Fiona. Not her, just something about her. I think her hair... it was different. Not the shape or - or in length. I don't know. I-I -

Jonas pauses in frustration.

JONAS
It changed. I don't know how.

THE GIVER
When I gave you the memory yesterday, the first one, did you look around? Did you look at the sled?

JONAS
Ye-- No. I felt it under me.

The Giver ponders.

THE GIVER
Lie down.

Jonas does so and shuts his eyes tight.

41.

THE GIVER
Call back the memory of the ride on the hill, just the beginning of it. And this time, look down at the sled.

Jonas opens his eyes.

JONAS
Excuse me, but don't you have to place your hands on my back?

THE GIVER
It's your memory now. It's no longer mine to give.

JONAS
How do I call it?
THE GIVER
Well, you can remember last year, or the year you were a Seven or Five, can't you?

JONAS
Of course.

THE GIVER
It's much the same. Just concentrate.

Jonas shuts his eyes again.

EXT. SNOWY HILL - NIGHT
Jonas sits on the sled atop the hill. A world of snowflakes swirl about him.

He blows his steamy breathe into the air and watches it float away with childlike delight.

Then, he looks down at the sled. The wood of the structure is painted CRIMSON, the same distinct shade as the apple and Fiona's hair.

Jonas blinks at it, and the color does not waver; it simply is. It is a red sled.

BACK TO THE GIVER'S ROOM
Jonas sits up on the bed. The Giver watches him curiously.

42.

JONAS
I saw it. In the sled.

THE GIVER
You're beginning to see the color red.

Jonas stares at the old man, dumbfounded.

THE GIVER
Uh, back before the time of Sameness, back in the time of memories, everything had a shape and size, the way they still do, but they also had another quality called color. There were many colors, and one of them was called red. That's the one you're starting to see. Your friend Fiona has red hair - quite distinctive, actually. I've noticed it before myself.

JONAS
At the Ceremony, I saw it happen in the faces of the audience.
THE GIVER
Yes - well no. Flesh isn't red, but it has red tones in it. There was a time, actually - you'll see in the memories later - when flesh was many different colors. That was before we went to Sameness. The faces you saw, I'm sure, weren't as deep or vibrant as your friend's hair. We've never completely mastered Sameness. I suppose the genetic scientists are still working out the kinks. Hair like Fiona's must drive them crazy.

JONAS
The color on the sled, Giver, it didn't change. It just was!

THE GIVER
That's because it was a memory from when color just was.

JONAS
It was so . . . Giver, the red was so beautiful! Do you see it all the time?

THE GIVER
All of them. I see all of them. You will when you receive my memories. You'll gain wisdom, then the colors. And so much more.

JONAS
Why can't everyone see them?

THE GIVER
Our people made that choice to go to Sameness. Before my time, before the previous time, and back, and back, and back. We relinquished color when we relinquished sunshine and did away with differences. We gained control of many things, but we had to do away with others.

JONAS
We shouldn't have!

The Giver is startled by Jonas' outburst.

THE GIVER
You've come very quickly to that conclusion. It took me many
years. Lie back down, now. We have so much to do.

Jonas obliges.

THE GIVER
Close your eyes and be still, now. I'm going to give you a memory of a rainbow.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. BLACK VOID

Infinite darkness. A single shaft of light shoots across the frame. Then another, and another. COLORS fill the shafts. The entire frame becomes populated by a rainbow of heavenly hues.

44.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY

JONAS
But it's all the same, always! I mean I know it's not important if you put on a red tunic or a blue one, but . . .

THE GIVER
It's the freedom that's important, isn't it?

JONAS
Yes. Exactly.

THE GIVER
Well, consider this: what if you chose wrong with something that is important in the community?

Jonas calms down.

JONAS
Like if we allowed people to choose their own mate? That wouldn't be safe.

THE GIVER
Why not? Not safe?

JONAS
It's . . . Oh, I see. It doesn't matter when it's a child choosing between certain toys, but we can't let people choose their own spouses or jobs. What if they choose wrong?

THE GIVER
Frightening?
JONAS
I suppose. They would be stuck in those positions. I suppose we have to protect people from wrong choices.

THE GIVER
It's safer?

JONAS
Yes. Much safer.

TIME CUT

The Giver places his hands on Jonas' back.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN AFRICA - DAY

Jonas is in a land of sparse grass and rocks. The CRACK of a FIRING RIFLE resounds. Jonas catches the glimpse of a massive elephant CRASHING to the ground.

A group of POACHERS, some of them with DARK BROWN SKIN, emerge from the shrubbery. They approach the fallen giant and begin hacking at its tusks with sharpened machetes.

Jets of STARTLINGLY RED BLOOD blanket the surrounding terrain.

The men take the tusks and speed off in an off-road vehicle. Another elephant emerges from some thick vegetation and covers the body of its comrade with a bundle of branches. The grieving animal ROARS into the empty landscape.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - LIVING AREA - DAY

Jonas watches Lily play with her comfort object: a stuffed elephant.

JONAS
Lily, did you know that once there really were elephants? Live ones?

Lily rolls her eys.

LILY
Right. Sure, Jonas.

THE GIVER'S ROOM

Jonas enters the room, only to find the Giver hunched over on his knees, writhing in pain.
Come back tomorrow. I'm in great pain today.

Jonas leaves.

BLACK VOID

LIGHTNING CRACKS violently across the frame.

EXT. CENTRAL PLAZA - DAY

Jonas and Asher walk along a landscaped lawn with a bush of BRIGHT RED roses. Jonas stops Asher and presses his hands against his back.

JONAS

Look . . .

Jonas stares at the roses. Asher looks around, puzzled, then steps away from Jonas' hands.

ASHER

What's the matter?

JONAS

No, nothing. I thought for a minute that they were wilting, and we should let the Gardening Crew know they needed more watering.

THE GIVER'S ROOM

The Giver places his hands on Jonas' back.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

FAMILY and FRIENDS are gathered around a YOUNG BOY sitting at a table. A chocolate cake with thick frosting, bearing a name and nine candles, is the centerpiece. Everyone SINGS a song directed toward the child. Jonas watches from the back of the room.

THE GIVER'S ROOM

Some of the books lining the walls are now in FULL COLOR.

JONAS

Do you advise the Committee of Elders often?

THE GIVER

Rarely. Not nearly as often as I should. There are so many things I could tell them, but they don't
THE GIVER (cont'd)
Life here is just so painless.
It's what they've chosen.

JONAS
I don't see why they even need a Receiver, then.

THE GIVER
They need me. And you. They were reminded of that ten years ago, with the failure of my successor.

JONAS
Why did that remind them?

THE GIVER
When the new Receiver failed, the memories that she had received were released. They went . . . The Giver waves his hand airily.

THE GIVER
I don't know exactly. They didn't return to me. They went out to the community; everyone had access to the memories. It was chaos. They suffered until it subsided as the memories assimilated, but it reminded them just how much they needed me to contain all that pain. And knowledge.

JONAS
But you have to suffer like that all the time.

The Giver nods.

THE GIVER
As will you.

TIME CUT

The Giver places his hands on Jonas' back.

EXT. LUSH FIELD - DAY

An unreal swarm of BUTTERFLIES swirl around Jonas' body, then float off down a slope of tall grass.

THE GIVER'S ROOM
JONAS

My Instructors in science and technology have taught us about the--

The Giver cuts him off with a bitter tone:

THE GIVER
-- They know nothing.

Jonas, stunned, nervously looks over to the speaker-box on the wall. It has been switched "OFF."

THE GIVER
Nothing.

TIME CUT

The Giver places his hands on Jonas' back.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Jonas rides a grand, gleaming stallion at top speed.

EXT. RUNNING STREAM - DAY

The horse drinks from the cold stream, then affectionately nudges Jonas' shoulder with its head.

THE GIVER'S ROOM

The Giver places his hands on Jonas' back.

EXT. KILAUEA - DAY

The grand volcano TREMBLES and ERUPTS with overwhelming ferocity, spurting glowing RED magma, and a wealth of knowledge, from its mighty head.

END MONTAGE

THE GIVER'S ROOM

JONAS

Giver, what causes you pain?

The Giver remains silent. Jonas continues:

The Chief Elder told me the memories would bring me great pain. I haven't suffered. I remember the sunburn, but it wasn't so terrible. I have to see you suffer. Maybe if you gave some to me, your pain would be less.
THE GIVER
Lie down.

Jonas removes his tunic and follows the order.

THE GIVER
All right. We'll start with something familiar. Let's go once again to a hill, and a sled.

The Giver places his hands on Jonas' back.

EXT. ANOTHER SNOWY HILL - NIGHT

This hill is steep, and the snowfall hard and jagged.

The sled, Jonas atop it, slides forward and tips off the apex of the hill. The runners SCRAPE the ice as it drops downward, picking up acceleration.

The sled slips and Jonas loses control. A bump on the hill launches his body one way, and the sled another. Jonas flies through space and lands on a patch of unforgiving ice.

The unmistakable CRACK of bone ECHOES across the tundra.

Jonas lay still, his face smashed into the blue. He GASPS ALOUD, then turns his head and vomits onto the cold canvas. He SCREAMS, then begins SOBBING.

Steam rises from both the patch of bubbling vomit, and the gaping hole in his leg.

BACK TO THE GIVER'S ROOM

Jonas sits up, his face wet with tears. He rubs his unbroken leg.

JONAS
May I have a relief-of-pain pill, please?

The Giver shakes his head apologetically.

THE GIVER
I'm sorry.

Jonas hangs his head and grimaces in pain.

JONAS
Why? Why do you and I have to hold these memories?

THE GIVER
It gives us wisdom. Without wisdom I could not fulfill my function of advising the Committee of Elders when they call upon me.
JONAS
But what wisdom do you get from pain?

The Giver sighs and collects his thoughts.

THE GIVER
Some time ago, before your birth, a lot of citizens petitioned the Committee of Elders. They wanted to increase birth rates. They wanted each Birthmother to be assigned an extra birth, so that the population would increase and there would be more Laborers available.

JONAS
That makes sense.

THE GIVER
The idea was that certain family units could accommodate an additional child.

JONAS
Mine could. We have Gabriel this year, and it's fun, having a third child.

THE GIVER
The Committee of Elders sought my advice. It made sense to them, too, but it was a new idea, and they came to me for wisdom.

JONAS
And you used your memories.

THE GIVER
And the strongest memory that came back to me was hunger. It came from many generations back. Centuries back. The population had gotten so big that hunger was everywhere. Excruciating hunger and starvation. It was followed by warfare.

JONAS
So you described that to them?

THE GIVER
They don't want to hear about pain. They just seek the advice. I simply advised them against increasing the population.

Jonas holds his leg.
JONAS
What does the word "warfare" mean?

THE GIVER
You'll learn soon enough. But it means destruction, I suppose.

JONAS
Destruction? Why - But why can't everyone hold a little bit of the pain? If we all shared the memories, wouldn't the pain be less?

THE GIVER
Yes. But then everyone would be burdened and pained, and that's not what they want. It's not what they've chosen. We carry the burden for our community. It's the real reason you and I are so honored.

EXT. AREA OF DWELLINGS - DAY
Jonas limps homeward, pushing his bike along the path at his side.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - LIVING AREA - NIGHT
The family unit is gathered around baby Gabriel. Jonas sits at the desk, studying.

FATHER
After all this extra time I've put in with him, I hope they don't release him.

MOTHER
Maybe it would be for the best. I know you don't mind getting up with him, but the lack of sleep is awfully hard for me.

Lily waves Gabriel's stuffed hippo for him to see.

LILY
If they release Gabe, could we get another newchild as a visitor?

FATHER
No, Lily-billy, it's very rare that it happens, anyway. It probably won't happen again for a long time. Anyway, Gabriel's release won't be discussed anytime
soon. We're preparing for a Birthmother who's expecting twins.

MOTHER
Oh, dear. If they're identical, I hope you're not assigned.

FATHER
I am. I'm next on the list. It's not a difficult decision, though. I'll just look at the birthweight, and simply release the smaller of the two.

Jonas looks up from the desk.

JONAS
Mother? Father? Why don't we just put Gabriel's crib in my room tonight? I know how to care for him. It would let the two of you get some sleep.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas sleeps soundly in his bed. Gabriel, in his crib, begins fidgeting beneath his covers. The newchild starts to WHIMPER.

Jonas wakes up and attends to Gabe. He places his hand on the boy's back and begins patting him rhythmically. Still patting the child back to sleep, Jonas shuts his tired eyes.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

A gentle wind carries a sailboat across clear turquoise water. Jonas rides in the boat, the brisk air combing through his hair.

Suddenly, his smile disappears as the water becomes murky, the boat slows, and the sky above him dims.

BACK TO JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM

Jonas rips his hand from Gabriel's back and leaps toward his bed, frightened. The baby is suddenly calm, completely peaceful, staring off into space with his PALE EYES.

BACK TO THE LAKE

The scene is just as vivid as it once was with Gabriel sailing in the boat, GIGGLING MERRILY.

BACK TO JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM

Jonas sits still in the dark. Gabriel falls back to sleep.
INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY

Jonas enters and immediately sees the Giver hunched in his chair, wincing in pain.

JONAS
I'll come back tomorrow, sir.

Jonas turns to leave. The Giver GASPS in agony:

THE GIVER
Please . . .

Jonas turns back. The Giver's face is contorted by the suffering.

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THE GIVER
. . . take some of the pain.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

All around Jonas, fallen SOLDIERS lay either dead or near death. SOUNDS OF FIREARMS BOOM in the distance.

A wild horse charges across the expanse, WHINNYING in panic, before it crashes to the dirt and does not rise again.

SOLDIER (O.C.)
Water . . .

Jonas looks over and sees a soldier not much older than himself. The boy soldier is bloody and beaten. The colors of carnage are disturbingly BRIGHT on his person: CRIMSON on the boy's chest; shreds of GREEN grass in his YELLOW hair.

Jonas now notices that his own body is outstretched across the blood-soaked earth. He is wearing a gray uniform, the same as the yellow-haired soldier's, and a splintered bone is protruding through the skin on his elbow.

SOLDIER
Water . . .

As the boy pleads again, a fresh spurt of RED is ejected from his mouth.

Jonas reaches with his unwounded arm for the metal container on his hip. He manages to unscrew the cap with his teeth, and bring it to his comrade's lips. Jonas pours water into the soldier's mouth, down his grimy chin.

THE THUD OF CANNONS BANG in the distance. VOICES OF MEN CRY OUT. Wounded horses, on their backs, stab randomly at the air with their hooves.

The young soldier next to Jonas closes his eyes and dies.

BACK TO THE GIVER'S ROOM
The Giver pulls his hands from Jonas’ back and turns away in shame.

THE GIVER
Forgive me.

INT. JONAS’ DWELLING – LIVING AREA – DAY

The family unit stirs about, getting set to leave the dwelling and begin their days.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
Today is declared an unscheduled holiday.

They all stop in their tracks and turn to the speaker-box from which the message came.

FATHER
Well, alright!

Jonas drops his folders back on the desk. They all smile in excitement.

EXT. THE BRIDGE – DAY

Jonas speeds over the cobblestone bridge.

EXT. PLAYING FIELD – DAY

A large group of CHILDREN of various ages frolic through the sizable plot of grass and trees, LAUGHING and SCREAMING with delight.

Jonas rides up to the field and tosses his bike alongside one of the many other bicycles strewn about the area. He spots Asher playing with the other children.

JONAS
(calling out)
Asher! Hey, Ash!

Too busy with his game to hear his friend, Asher ducks behind a bush. Jonas steps onto the field and one of the children leaps in front of him, holding his hand in the shape of a gun.

CHILD
Bang! Bang! Bang!

Another child streaks by and pretends to shoot the kid who shot at Jonas.

OTHER CHILD
Psssheeewwww!
The first child dramatically grabs his chest and collapses to the ground. Jonas watches uneasily.

CHILD
You got me!

Suddenly, Asher leaps from behind a tree and shoots Jonas with his fingers.

ASHER
Blam! You're in my line of ambush, Jonas! Blam, blam!

Jonas steps back as Asher charges by him. Another group of children appear at the other end of the playing field. Jonas notices that Fiona is one of them.

FIONA
Attack!

Asher and the others on this side of the field hold their imaginary firearms poised.

ASHER
Counter-attack!

The two groups of players converge in the center of the field and exchange explosion sound effects and hand gestures. Before long, most of the children throw themselves on the grass, shot.

Jonas' complexion takes on a sallow tone. He virtually sleepwalks toward the action on the field.

ASHER
Pow! You're hit, Jonas! Pow!
You're hit again!

Jonas doesn't throw himself down. The numerous "hit" children on the ground look up at him quizzically. The few still firing stop and watch.

Jonas' breathing SHUDDERS. He struggles to fight back the tears. The children look at each other nervously, before awkwardly walking away to another game.

They leave until only Asher and Fiona remain staring perplexed at Jonas' paralyzed body.

FIONA
What's wrong, Jonas? It's only a game.

ASHER
You ruined it.

JONAS
Don't play it anymore.
ASHER
I'm the one who's training for Assistant Recreation Director. Games aren't your area of expertness.

JONAS
Expertise.

ASHER
You can't say what we play, even if you are going to be the new Receiver.

BEAT.

ASHER
I apologize for not paying you the respect you deserve.

JONAS
Asher, you had no way of knowing this, but it's a cruel game. In the past--

ASHER
-- I said I apologize, Jonas.

JONAS
I accept your apology.

FIONA
Do you want to go for a ride along the river, Jonas?

Jonas looks at his gentle female friend. Her blazing red hair makes her appear lovelier than ever.

JONAS
No. I-I'm sorry, no, I . . .

Fiona nods along, hiding her surprise. She goes off with Asher, and they find their bicycles and take off together.

Jonas hangs his head.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - NIGHT

The family unit is gathered around the table for the evening meal.

LILY
I can't wait till the ceremonies in a few months, so I can finally become a Nine and get my very own bicycle. Father's is too big for me. I fell. Good thing Gabe
wasn't in the - wasn't in the child seat!

MOTHER
A very good thing.

Little Gabe walks freely around the table with his newly developing legs. He giggles at the mention of his name.

GABRIEL
Gay! Gay!

It's how the child pronounces his own name, and it brings a small smile to Jonas' weary face.

FATHER
Well, I want to get to sleep early. Tomorrow's a busy day for me. The twins are being born in a few days, and early test results are showing that they're identical. I have to get up early, and go confirm what we believe in the morning.

LILY
One for here, one for Elsewhere.

JONAS
Do you actually take it Elsewhere, Father?

FATHER
No, I just have to make the selection. I weigh them, hand the larger one over to a Nurturer who's standing by, waiting, and then I get the smaller one all cleaned up and comfortable. Then I perform a small Ceremony of Release.

Father looks down at Gabriel.

FATHER (cont'd)
(baby voice)
Then I wave bye-bye!

Father waves at Gabe, who raises his chubby little hand and returns the gesture.

GABRIEL
Bye-bye!

JONAS
And somebody else comes to get him? Somebody from Elsewhere?

FATHER
That's right.
LILY
What if they give the little twin a name Elsewhere, a name like, oh, maybe Jonathan? And here, in our community, at his naming, the twin that we kept is given the name Jonathan, and then there would be two children with the same name, and they would look exactly the same, and someday, maybe when they were a Six, a group of Sixes would go to visit another community on a bus, and there in the other community, in the other group of Sixes, would be a Jonathan who was exactly the same as the other Jonathan, and then maybe they would get mixed up and take the wrong Jonathan home, and maybe his parents wouldn't notice.

Lily pauses to catch her breath.

MOTHER
Lily, I have a wonderful idea. Maybe when you become a Twelve, they'll give you the Assignment of Storyteller! I don't think we've had a Storyteller in the community for a long time.

LILY
I have a better idea for one more story. What if actually we were all twins and didn't know it, and

LILY (cont'd)
so Elsewhere there would be another Lily, and another Jonas, and another Mother and Father, and another Chief Elder --

FATHER
-- Lily. I think it's bedtime.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY
Jonas and the Giver sit across from each other.

THE GIVER
There are so many good memories.

JONAS
What's your favorite? You don't have to give it away yet. Just describe it, so I can look forward to it.
The Giver smiles.

THE GIVER
Lie down. I'm happy to give it to you.

Jonas obeys his mentor. The Giver places his hands on the boy's bare back.

INT. WARM HOME - DAY

A room filled with a FAMILY. A firelight glows on a hearth. It is visible, through a window, that it is snowing outside.

Colored lights, GREEN and RED, sparkle around a pine tree surrounded by wrapped packages.

A pair of children begin passing the packages around to a pair of adults, who are obviously parents, and also a much older couple, man and woman.

They all begin unwrapping the packages.

BACK TO THE GIVER'S ROOM

THE GIVER
What did you perceive?

Jonas sits up on the bed.

JONAS
Warmth. And ... family. I-It was some celebration, a holiday. Who were the old people? Why were they there?

THE GIVER
They were called Grandparents.

JONAS
Grand parents?

THE GIVER
Grandparents. It meant parents-of-the-parents, long ago.

JONAS
Back and back and back? So, actually, there could be parents-of-the-parents-of-the-parents?

THE GIVER
That's right.

JONAS
But my parents must've had parents, too! I never thought of that before. Who are they?
THE GIVER
You could look it up in the Hall of Open Records. You'd find the names. But think, son. If you apply for children, then who will be their grandparents?

JONAS
Well, my parents, of course.

THE GIVER
And where will they be?

JONAS
Oh . . . when I finish my training and become a full adult, I'll be given my own dwelling. And eventually after Lily does, then Mother and Father --

THE GIVER
-- That's right.

JONAS
They'll go live with the Childless Adults, and they won't be a part of my life anymore. As long as they're still working and contributing to the community.

THE GIVER
And when the time comes, they'll go to the House of the Old.

JONAS
And they'll be well cared for and respected, and when they're released, there will be a celebration.

THE GIVER
Which you won't attend.

JONAS
No, of course not, because I won't even know about it. By then I'll be so busy with my own life. And Lily will, too. If we choose to apply for children, and get them, they'll never know who their parents-of-the-parents are, either. It seems to work pretty well that way in our community, doesn't it?

THE GIVER
It works, yes.

JONAS
I certainly liked the memory. I
can see why it's your favorite. I couldn't quite get the word for the whole feeling of it, the feeling that was so strong in the room.

THE GIVER

Love.

A MOMENT passes . . .

JONAS

Giver?

THE GIVER

Yes?

JONAS

I feel very foolish saying this. Very --

THE GIVER

-- No need. Nothing is foolish here. Trust the memories and how they make you feel.

JONAS

Well, I know you don't have the memory anymore, so you may not understand.

THE GIVER

I will. I still have many memories of family, and holidays, and happiness. Of love.

JONAS

I was thinking that . . . well, I can see that it wasn't a very practical way to live, with the Old right there in the same place, and maybe they wouldn't be taken care of like they should. And the fire burning right there in the room. It was certainly a dangerous way to live, but I was thinking - I mean feeling, actually, that it was kind of nice then. I wish that we could be that way. If only just occasionally. Maybe you could even be my grandparent. It's just - the family in the memory seemed a little more . . .

THE GIVER

A little more complete?

Jonas nods his head in agreement.
INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - NIGHT

The family unit is just finishing up their evening meal. For the very first time, EVERYTHING on screen is in FULL VIBRANT COLOR.

JONAS
Mother? Father? I have a question to ask you.

FATHER
What is it, Jonas?

He takes a second to build up his mettle.

JONAS
Do you love me?

SILENCE . . . until an uncomfortable CHUCKLE escapes Father.

FATHER
Jonas, you of all people. Precision of language, please!

JONAS
What?

MOTHER
Your father means you used a very generalized word, so meaningless it's become almost obsolete. And of course our community can't function smoothly if people don't use precise language. You could ask, "Do you enjoy me?" The answer is, of course, "Yes."

FATHER
Or, "Do you take pride in my accomplishments?" And the answer is wholeheartedly, "Yes."

MOTHER
Do you understand why it's inappropriate to use a word like "love"?

INSERT: THE SHEET OF PAPER
from Jonas' Assignment folder. Focus in on number eight: "You may lie."

Jonas looks at his parents with manufactured sincerity.

JONAS
Yes, thank you, I do.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT
Jonas tucks sleepy-eyed Gabe into his crib. He whispers:

JONAS

Gabriel? Things could change. They could be different. They should. I don't know how, Gabe, but they can. There could be colors in the world again. And grandparents. Everyone could have memories. I know you already know about the memories.

The baby is falling fast asleep. Jonas watches over him.

JONAS

Gabe? There could be love.

INT. FATHER & MOTHER'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

Father takes his pill.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Mother swallows her pill for the Stirrings.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jonas stands over the sink, staring at his bottle of pills. He twists off the cap and pours all of the tablets down the drain.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY

Jonas is laying prone on the bed. He looks up at the Giver with his solemn eyes.

JONAS

Giver? Do you ever think about release?

THE GIVER

Do you mean my own release, or just the general topic of release?

JONAS

Both, I guess. I apologi- I mean I should have been more precise. But I don't know exactly what I meant.

THE GIVER

Sit back up.
Jonas does so. The Giver takes a moment to mull it over.

THE GIVER
I guess I do think about it occasionally. I think about it when I'm in an awful lot of pain. I wish I could put in a request for it sometimes and just give myself over to its cold embrace.

JONAS
How do you mean cold? Like the snowy hill?

The Giver studies Jonas.

THE GIVER
No, Jonas, not exactly. But, either way, I'm not permitted to apply for release until the new Receiver is trained.

JONAS
Me neither. I can't put in a request for my release. It was in my rules.

THE GIVER
I am aware. They hammered out those rules after the failure ten years ago.

JONAS
Giver . . . tell me what happened. Please.

The Giver shrugs his shoulders.

THE GIVER
On the surface, it was quite simple. A Receiver-to-be was selected, the way you were. The selection went smoothly enough. The Ceremony was held, and the selection was made. The crowd cheered, as they did for you. The new Receiver was puzzled and a little frightened, as you were.

JONAS
My parents told me it was a female.

The Giver nods.

JONAS
What was she like?
THE GIVER
She was a truly remarkable young woman. Very self-possessed and serene. Stunning eyes. She was intelligent, eager to learn. You know, Jonas, when she came to me in this room, when she--

JONAS
-- Can you tell me her name? My parents said that it wasn't to be spoken again in the community.

The Giver almost winces, as if in pain.

THE GIVER
Her name was Rosemary.

JONAS
Rosemary . . . I like that name.

THE GIVER
When she came to me for the first time, she sat there in the chair where you sat on your first day. We talked. I tried to explain things as well as I could. The whole thing is so beyond one's experience, but I tried. And she listened. Her eyes were very luminous, I remember. I loved her. I feel the same way of you, Jonas.

JONAS
What happened to her?

THE GIVER
Her training began. She received well, as you do. She was so enthusiastic. So delighted to experience new things. I remember her laughter . . .

JONAS
What happened?

THE GIVER
It broke my heart, Jonas, to transfer pain to her. Five weeks, that was all. I gave her happy memories: a ride on a merry-go-round; a kitten to play with; a picnic. Sometimes I chose one just because I knew it would make her laugh. But she was like you, Jonas. She wanted to experience everything. And she
asked me for more difficult memories.

JONAS
You didn't give her war after just five weeks, did you?

THE GIVER
No. And I didn't give her physical pain. But I gave her loneliness and loss. I transferred a memory of a child being taken from its parents. That was the first one. She appeared stunned at its end. I backed off, gave her more little delights. But everything changed, once she knew about pain. I could see it in those eyes.

JONAS
She wasn't brave enough?

The Giver takes a deep breath before continuing.

THE GIVER
She insisted that I continue, that I not spare her. She said it was her duty. And I knew, of course, that she was correct. I couldn't bring myself to inflict physical pain on her, but I gave her anguish of many kinds. Poverty, and hunger, and terror. I had to, Jonas. It was my job, and she had been chosen.

The Giver wipes his tears.

THE GIVER
Finally, one afternoon, we finished for the day. It had been a hard session. I had to catch up and transfer many memories at one time. I tried - as I do with you - to finish the day with something cheerful. She stood up very silently, then she walked over and put her arms around me. She kissed my cheek. She left here that day and did not go back to her dwelling. I was notified by the Speaker that she had gone directly to the Chief Elder and asked to be released.

JONAS
But it's against the rules.
THE GIVER
It's in your rules, Jonas. But it wasn't in hers. She asked for release and they had to give it to her. I never saw her again.

JONAS
Giver, I can't request release. I know that. But what if something happened? An accident? I know I'm a good swimmer, but what if I wasn't and I fell into the river? A whole year's worth of memories would be released onto the community. And then . . . I - I'm starting to sound like my sister.

THE GIVER
You just stay away from the river. The community lost Rosemary after five weeks and it was a disaster for them. I don't know what the community would do if they ever lost you.

JONAS
Why was it a disaster?

THE GIVER
If you were lost in the river, your memories would not be lost with you. Memories are forever.

(MORE)

THE GIVER (cont'd)
Most of Rosemary's memories were good ones, but there were those few of suffering. They overwhelmed the community. All those feelings, and no point of reference! They'd never experienced that before. I was so devastated by my own grief at her loss, that I didn't even try to help them through it. I was angry, too. If they ever lost you, they wouldn't know how to deal with it.

JONAS
The only way I deal with it is by having you there to help me.

THE GIVER
I suppose that I could . . .

JONAS
. . . . You could what?

The Giver is deep in thought.
THE GIVER

If you ever floated off in the river, I suppose I could help the whole community the way I've helped you. It's an interesting concept. I'll have to think about it some more. But I'm glad you're a good swimmer, Jonas.

Jonas laughs, but it's not lighthearted. Both his eyes and the Giver's carry their troubled thoughts.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Jonas, Asher, Fiona, and the rest of their groupmates rise from their desks and exit the classroom at the sound of the speaker-box's TONE.

EXT. RECREATIONAL AREA - DAY

Jonas and Fiona sit on a bench together, some distance away from the rest of their groupmates. They watch the others enjoy their free period as they converse.

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FIONA
I can hardly believe we are coming up on one full year of training.

JONAS
I feel the same way. It certainly has been a memorable year.

Jonas turns his gaze to Fiona. She's so lovely. So unique and interesting with locks of flaming hair stretching down her back, the perfect frame for her innocent face.

FIONA
For me, too. I've enjoyed it. My training has been--

JONAS
-- Fiona . . .

She turns to Jonas, surprised by his interruption. Jonas almost retreats, but then goes for broke and dives in:

JONAS
Have you started taking your pill regularly? The one everyone has to take. I mean for the Stirrings - I-I mean I'm sorry for asking. I mean I apologize for being rude, but I ask for my training. It has to do with my Receiver training. I'm sorry, I probably should have said that to begin with.

Fiona struggles to find her words for a second.
FIONA
I-I accept your apology, Jonas.

JONAS
You don't need to answer. I should probably ask - I mean . . . um, sorry. I was just thinking of something from my training that I need to know. I can ask the current Receiver probably. He'll let me know.

FIONA
Very well . . .

JONAS
Yes . . .

They simply sit there, looking out at their groupmates.

INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - NIGHT

The family unit is gathered around the table for their evening meal. Little Gabriel plays merrily on the floor, BABBLING his baby talk.

LILY
(referring to Gabriel)
Look at him!

MOTHER
Lily, finish your meal, then look at him.

FATHER
Little guy should enjoy it. It's his last night here.

LILY
Why?!

JONAS
What do you mean, Father?

FATHER
Well, it seemed like a good idea to have him spend the night in the Nurturing Center yesterday. He had been sleeping so soundly with you, Jonas. But, unfortunately, it was a disaster. Apparently he cried the whole night. When I got to work in the morning the night crew was pretty frazzled.

LILY
Gabe, you naughty thing!
MOTHER
Lily, concentrate on your meal.
(to Father)
So, what's next?

FATHER
Well, obviously we had to make the
decision. Even I voted for
Gabriel's release at the meeting
this afternoon. We certainly gave
it our best try, didn't we?

MOTHER
Yes, we did. A shame.

JONAS
(to Father)
When?

FATHER
It's scheduled for a few weeks
from now. Tomorrow morning we
have the release of one of the
twins, so we'll be busy with that.
The upcoming Ceremony will
probably even push it back a
little further.
(baby voice)
But then it's bye-bye for baby
Gabe.

Father playfully waves goodbye to Gabriel. The child waves
back.

EXT. ANNEX - DAY
Jonas approaches the front entrance and BUZZES himself in.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY
Jonas enters.

JONAS
Hello, Giver.

THE GIVER
Welcome, Jonas. We should get
right to work.

JONAS
Yes, I've been wasting a lot of
our sessions with questions about
release recently.

THE GIVER
Not one moment was a waste.
Jonas takes a seat.

JONAS
I've just been curious lately, I suppose. Back at my dwelling, my father's been telling us about the twins at the Nurturing Center.

(MORE)

JONAS (cont'd)
He had to release one today. That's probably it.

THE GIVER
I wish they wouldn't do that.

JONAS
Release one twin? Well, they can't have two identical citizens around. Think how confusing it would be.

Jonas takes a seat. Then, as an afterthought:

JONAS
I wish I could watch . . .

THE GIVER
You can watch.

JONAS
But they never let children in. Isn't it very private?

THE GIVER
Jonas, I know you read your training instructions very carefully. Don't you remember that you're allowed to ask anyone anything at any time?

JONAS
Of course, but--

THE GIVER
-- If you want to watch a release, you have simply to ask.

JONAS
Well, maybe I will, then. But it's too late for this one. I'm sure it was this morning.

THE GIVER
All private ceremonies are recorded. They're in the Hall of Closed Records. Do you want to see this morning's release?

Jonas freezes, mouth slightly agape.
THE GIVER
I think you should.

JONAS
All right, then.

The Giver makes his way across the room to the speaker-box on the wall. He flips the switch up to the "ON" position.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
Yes, Receiver. How may I help you?

THE GIVER
I would like to see this morning's release of the twin.

SPEAKER (V.O.)
One moment, Receiver. Thank you for your instructions.

The Giver returns to his seat and points Jonas' attention to a video screen on another wall in the room.

ON SCREEN

The glass face flashes on with a series of numeric code. Suddenly, the screen shows a windowless room, empty save for a bed and an operating table covered with equipment.

Jonas' father, in full Nurturing garb, enters the cramped operating room with a NEWCHILD in his arms. A FEMALE ASSISTANT follows Father in, carrying the newchild's TWIN.

ON JONAS & THE GIVER

JONAS
That's my father . . .

The Giver SHUSHES him.

ON SCREEN

Father and his assistant lay the naked babies down on the bed. One by one, Father picks up the twins and places them on a scale. After he weighs the second one:

FATHER
Good. I thought for a second they were going to be the same weight. Then we'd really have a problem. But he's six pounds even. You can take him over to the Care Center.

The assistant takes the six-pound child out through the door she entered, leaving Father and the other newchild alone.
(baby voice)
And you, little guy, you’re only five pounds ten ounces. A shrimp!

Now he cleans him up and makes him comfortable. He told me.

Jonas, be quiet. Watch.

Father reveals a syringe set and a bottle of lucid, bubbly liquid. He stabs the needle through the bottle's rubber lid, extracting the clear cocktail into the syringe.

Father wipes the newchild's forehead with an alcohol prep and casually STICKS the needle into the spot where the baby's head is pulsing.

The child squirms and WAILS FAINTLY.

I know, little guy, I know. But the veins in your arms are still too teeny-weeny. All done.

Father pushes down the plunger, emptying the syringe. The baby's extremities jerk in a violent conniption. His head slacks to the side, eyes half open. He is completely still.

as both their eyes fill with tears. Jonas' mouth hangs open. The Giver shakes his head.

as Father tidies the room. He lifts a carton from the floor and loads the child's corpse into it.

He opens a chute on the wall and loads the carton in.

The screen goes BLACK. Back to JONAS & THE GIVER:

When the Speaker notified me that Rosemary had been released, they turned on the tape to show me the process. There she was - my last glimpse at that beautiful child - waiting. They brought in the syringe and asked her to roll up
her sleeve. You suggested, Jonas, that perhaps she wasn't brave enough? I don't know much about bravery. I do know that I sat there numb with horror. Wretched with helplessness. I sat there and listened as Rosemary told them that she would prefer to inject herself.

The Giver loses control of his emotions. Jonas wraps him in a tight embrace and begins to WEEP HEAVILY.

TIME CUT - NIGHT

Jonas and the Giver are slumped lazily in their chairs, completely drained from their mutual outpour of emotion.

JONAS
Is it always like that with release? For the Old? For people who break the community rules three times? Do they kill the Old?

THE GIVER
Yes. It's always the same.

JONAS
What about Fiona? She loves the Old. Does she know yet?

THE GIVER
Your friend is already being trained in the fine art of release. Feelings are not part of the life she's learned.

JONAS
What should I do? I can't go back.

The Giver rises from his seat.

THE GIVER
First, I will order our evening meal. Then we will eat.

Jonas pipes up with bitter sarcasm:

JONAS
Then we'll have a sharing of feelings?

The Giver lets out an empty belt of laughter. He walks over and rubs Jonas' hunched shoulders.

THE GIVER
Jonas, you and I are the only ones who have feelings. We've been
sharing them now for almost a year.

JONAS
I'm sorry, Giver. I don't mean to be so hateful. Not to you.

The Giver walks toward the speaker-box on the wall.

JONAS (cont'd)
And, after we eat, we'll make a plan.

The Giver stops short of the speaker-box; turns to Jonas.

THE GIVER
A plan for what?

Jonas answers his mentor with a simple look: one of determination, self-assurance, destiny.

THE GIVER
Very well.

EXT. AREA OF DWELLINGS - DAY

Jonas rides his bike up to his dwelling.

THE GIVER (O.S.)
The community has depended, all these generations, back and back and back, on a resident Receiver to hold their memories for them. The good, the bad, the unspeakably horrific, and the unbelievably beautiful; all of them. I've turned over many of them to you, (MORE)

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THE GIVER (cont'd)
and I cannot take back what I have given. So, if you escape, once you are gone, Jonas, you know that you can never return . . .

Jonas ports his bicycle and walks into his dwelling.

JONAS (O.S.)
Yes.

THE GIVER (O.S.)
If you get away, if you get beyond, if you get Elsewhere, it will mean that the community has to bear the burden themselves, of the memories you had been holding for them. A full year's worth of agony and ecstasy.
INT. JONAS' DWELLING - DINING AREA - DAY

Jonas and his family unit quietly eat their standard morning meals at the table.

JONAS (O.S.)
I'll leave at midnight, the morning of the annual Ceremonies.
I'll be careful. No one will see me.

THE GIVER (O.S.)
As Receiver-in-training, you're held in very high respect already.
So I think you wouldn't be questioned very forcefully.
There's no nighttime attendant here at the Annex. I'll leave the door unlocked. You simply slip into the room. I'll be waiting for you.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Jonas and his groupmates listen to the ramblings of their Instructor in the middle of a lesson.

THE GIVER (O.S.)
Leave your parents a note, telling them that you decided to go on a morning ride along the river.
Write that you'll be back in time (MORE)

THE GIVER (cont'd)
for the Ceremony. They'll be irritated, but not alarmed.

JONAS (O.S.)
They won't mention anything to anyone, because it would reflect on their parenting. And anyway, everyone is so involved in the Ceremonies that they probably won't notice that I'm not there.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - DAY

Jonas and the Giver sit across from each other.

THE GIVER
I'll save and package portions from all of my meals in the few weeks we still have until the Ceremony. I'll give them all to you when you arrive.

JONAS
Be sure to save plenty . . .
because I'm taking Gabriel with me. I wish you would come, too.

The Giver regretfully shakes his head.

JONAS
I understand they'll need you.

THE GIVER
My work will be finished when I have helped the community to change and become a whole.

JONAS
But don't you want to be with me, Giver?

THE GIVER
Jonas, I love you. But my role is to stay. You're forgetting my age. I would never make it. I'm drained. Did you know that I no longer see color?

Jonas' eyes almost burst with tears.

THE GIVER
We don't know what lies beyond our community and the bordering communities we associate with, Jonas. There may be nothing at all, or there may be serious danger, or there may be everything you're looking for.

JONAS
There may be love. There may be freedom. I won't find any of that here.

THE GIVER
Well, then . . . You have the colors now. And the strength. I'll transfer my remaining memories of warmth to you. Also, it's about time I transferred something else to you. I think I've been a bit selfish. I wanted to hold it for myself as long as I could, but you need to understand everything before you go.

JONAS
What is it?

THE GIVER
When I was a boy, younger than you, it wasn't the seeing beyond that came to me. It was
different. For me, it was hearing-beyond.

JONAS
What did you hear?

THE GIVER
Music. I began to hear something truly remarkable, and it's called music. I'll give you some before you go.

JONAS
No, Giver. I want you to keep that, to have with you, when I'm gone.

The Giver smiles gently.

JONAS
Are you sure you're not coming with me?

A genuine laugh escapes The Giver.

THE GIVER
Oh, no! No, I have another place to go. When my work is done here, I want to finally be with my daughter.

JONAS
Giver! You told me you had a spouse, but you have never mentioned a daughter.

The Giver smiles wide and nods. For the very first time, he looks TRULY HAPPY.

THE GIVER
Yes. Her name was Rosemary.

INT. FATHER & MOTHER'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

They are fast asleep in their respective beds.

INT. LILY'S SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

She sleeps peacefully, as well.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPING-ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas, operating quietly in the dark, folds his extra tunics and bundles them together with a piece of sturdy thread.

He places a sheet of paper on his bed with all the details the Giver ordered him to leave.
He ties Gabriel's sleeping body to his own with the child's blanket and tiptoes out of the room.

EXT. JONAS' DWELLING - NIGHT

Jonas sneaks up to his family's row of bicycles with Gabe. He selects his father's bike with the sturdy carrying basket in the front and the molded child seat in the back.

Jonas hops on with Gabe and they ride off through the area of dwellings.

EXT. CENTRAL PLAZA - NIGHT

A last look at the flavorless city center, as it sits dead in the still of the night. Jonas and Gabriel zip through on Father's bike.

INT. THE GIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Giver gives Jonas a hefty satchel of food. They embrace.

JONAS

There's love out there.

The Giver looks at the newchild resting peacefully against Jonas' chest and manages a sincere smile.

THE GIVER

Godspeed, my son.

The Giver returns to his chair. Jonas leaves.

EXT. THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

The two young fugitives ride over the old cobblestone bridge.

EXT. ANOTHER COMMUNITY - NIGHT

Jonas pedals past one of the separate, outlying communities. Their dark, uniform buildings are just barely visible, traced out against the night sky.

EXT. UNKNOWN TERRITORY - NIGHT

The paved road continues through a wild area with expansive fields of trees and shrubbery. Jonas looks to be tiring, but he pedals on, determined.

EXT. FOREST AREA - DAY
Jonas and Gabriel rest in a patch of soft grass under the veil of the towering trees of the area. Jonas feeds Gabe and himself a few morsels from the satchel.

EXT. UNKNOWN TERRITORY - NIGHT

Gabriel sits in the rear child seat now, as Jonas pushes along the path looking as strong as ever. THE SOUND OF AN ENGINE ROARS FROM BEHIND.

Jonas recognizes the sound and turns into a nearby bush. He drops the bike and dives behind the shrubbery with Gabriel in his arms.

INT. AIRCRAFT COCKPIT - NIGHT

Focus on the pilot's control board, which is populated by an overabundance of buttons, switches, and other advanced technological tools. One of the gadgets is labeled as a heat-seeking view screen.

UNKNOWN TERRITORY - BUSHES

Jonas frantically places his hands against Gabe's back, closes his eyes, and transfers a memory.

COCKPIT

The view screen is only picking up cool blobs of gray in the area.

UNKNOWN TERRITORY - BUSHES

Jonas and Gabe are shivering in the bush, as the sound of the airplane's engine fades away.

EXT. UNTAMED TERRAIN - DAY

The paved roads disappear, and Jonas rides down the narrowing path over stones and ruts.

The bike's front tire catches a large rock and CRASHES into the dirt. Gabe is fine, but Jonas winces in pain as the result of a scraped knee.

EXT. RUNNING STREAM - DAY

Gabriel helps Jonas rinse off his bloody knee in the water.

UNTAMED TERRAIN

Jonas braves on, pushing the pedals non-stop. Suddenly, Gabe points his chubby arm to the sky:
GABRIEL
Pané! Pané!

That's how he says "plane." Jonas veers them off the pathway and under the nearest assemblage of vegetation.

Hearing no roaring engine, Jonas pokes his head out from the trees and sees nothing more than your average jaybird soaring through the sky.

GABRIEL
It's a pane!

Jonas smiles.

TIME CUT - NIGHT

They ride all night, worn and dirtied, every second taking them farther and farther away.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Jonas chases his adopted brother through the tall grass. They LAUGH and HOLLER with delight as they tackle each other, get up, and run around some more.

EXT. UNTAMED TERRAIN - DAY

Jonas and Gabe have stopped in the middle of nowhere to stare at a pair of deer nosing around some bushes. Gabriel points at the animals excitedly:

GABRIEL
Oohhh! Oohhh!

EXT. POND - DAY

Jonas and Gabriel sit by the muddy water and eat the last of the food from their satchel.

EXT. UNTAMED TERRAIN - NIGHT

Jonas pedals through the night as it rains down heavily, soaking everything in sight.

EXT. RUNNING STREAM - DAY

Jonas kneels by the stream and randomly jabs his fists into the water, trying to catch a fish.

TIME CUT
Jonas weaves the the strands of Gabe’s blanket around a curved stick.

TIME CUT

Jonas swoops his makeshift net into the stream again and again. After countless tries, he comes up with a single flapping, silvery fish.

INT. PATCH OF SHRUBBERY - NIGHT

Jonas pounds the dead fish with a rock. He and Gabriel share the raw shreds.

EXT. UNTAMED TERRAIN - DAY

Jonas and Gabriel ride on, looking very weary, with their clothes torn and faces dirtied.

EXT. GRASSY AREA - NIGHT

Baby Gabe lay sleeping next to Jonas, who is wide awake.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

A group of SEVENS stand in the line, waiting to receive their midday meals. One of them is SEVEN-YEAR-OLD JONAS. He is standing in front of SEVEN-YEAR-OLD ASHER.

    JONAS
    (to Asher)
    I'm starving.

An INSTRUCTOR standing nearby overhears this.

    INSTRUCTOR
    Jonas!

The Instructor stomps over and pulls Jonas out of line, leading him away from the other children.

    INSTRUCTOR
    Jonas, you must learn to use more precise language. You are not starving, that is a gross exaggeration. You simply have some feelings of hunger, because it is time for the midday meal.

    JONAS
    I apologize for not speaking precisely, Instructor.

    INSTRUCTOR
    I accept your apology, Jonas. As long as you are a part of this
community, you will never be starving.

BACK TO THE GRASSY AREA

Jonas pulls Gabriel's sleeping body closer to his own and begins to WEEP softly.

EXT. SOMEWHERE COLD - NIGHT

Jonas and Gabe slowly pedal down the endless ribbon of path in front of them. They appear weak and drained; as miserable as can be. Jonas rounds the the narrow curves in the road with less urgency than before.

A soft, swirling downfall of white begins to descend upon them. They're shivering.

As the snowfall thickens, they ride up to the base of a tall hill blanketed in frosty white precipitation.

Jonas pulls Gabe from the child seat and drops the bike. He wraps the child's torn and dirtied blanket around the both of them, again securing Gabriel in place against his chest.

He whispers:

JONAS
It's called snow, Gabe. They're called snowflakes. They're beautiful . . .

Jonas begins scaling the snowy hill. He has to force his tired legs with every step. As he presses on, Jonas places his hands against Gabe's back and concentrates.

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EXT. BEACH - DAY

The sun beats down radiantly, but only for a second and then they are transported

BACK TO SOMEWHERE COLD

Back to the snowy hill. Jonas continues trudging up the hill, until he trips over a mound of snow and falls. He slowly regains his footing, then places his hands on Gabriel's back once more.

BACK TO THE BEACH

The sun shines brilliantly but, even quicker than it happened before, it is

BACK TO SOMEWHERE COLD

Back to the snowy hill. Jonas looks down at Gabe in his arms. The newchild's usually rosy cheeks have been tinted
blue, with dried tear stains outlined in dirt. He is in a DEEP SLEEP.

Jonas fights on, dragging his heavy feet up the hill, until he reaches the summit. Jonas stops walking, finally on level ground. The snow swirls in the air. He smiles.

JONAS
We're almost there, Gabe. I remember this place.

Jonas walks to the opposite edge of the hill and sits down on the RED SLED. He holds Gabriel tight and brushes away the powdery snow beneath him until his hands find the rope.

Jonas blows his breath into the air and watches it drift away with the snowflakes. He sits intoxicated by the surreal beauty of the scene before him, as he stares off into space . . .

Finally, he leans his body forward, and they start down on the sled, slicing through the ice with ease. Down and down, faster and faster.

JONAS' POV -

through the whipping wind and thick, swirling snow. It's difficult to see, but there are LIGHTS dancing along the horizon . . .

A faint echo of MUSIC flutters, and then BUILDS. PEOPLE SINGING. The harmonious MELODY plays like a lullaby.

Jonas smiles in ecstasy with sleeping Gabriel clamped tightly to his torso. The sled picks up speed as it zips down the final diagonal stretch of the snowy hill.

The music. The colors. The snow. Down, down, down; faster, faster, faster.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END