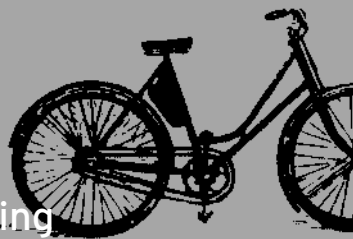


Chapter Charter: Questions to Guide Your Reading



The following questions will help you think about the important parts of each chapter.

Chapter 1

- What do you imagine it means when someone is “released”?
- What are some clues that Jonas’s community is different from the one in which you live?

Chapter 2

- How would you feel not to have your own individual birthday?
- If you were attending the Ceremony of Twelve with Jonas, what Assignment do you think the Elders would select for you?

Chapter 3

- How would you feel to be watched all the time, the way Jonas is?
- Do you think it says something about Jonas that he sees the apple change?

Chapter 4

- Jonas’s community has a lot of rules. Do you think that’s a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

Chapter 5

- Why was Jonas embarrassed about telling his dream?

- How important is sameness in Jonas’s community? How important is it in your community?

Chapter 6

- All the members of Jonas’s family had to sign a pledge that they would not become attached to the newchild, Gabe. Do you think it’s possible to keep such a promise?
- What do you think of how families in Jonas’s community are formed?

Chapter 7

- Do you think Asher should have been given the discipline wand when he was three, for saying “smack” instead of “snack”?
- How would you feel if you were in Jonas’s shoes and the Chief Elder skipped right over you when she was making Assignments?

Chapter 8

- What do you think Jonas’s Capacity to See Beyond is?
- Would you rather be selected, as Jonas was, or assigned, as his groupmates were?

Chapter 9

- Jonas tells himself several times that things can’t change between him and his best friend, Asher. Do you think they can? Do you think they will?
- Why does Jonas find the final rule in his instructions, “You may lie,” so unsettling?

Chapter 10

- What do you think it means to live in a place where no doors are ever locked?
- Jonas says, “I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now.” Do you think that’s a good way to live?

Chapter 11

- Can you imagine giving up such things as snow and hills because they are impractical?

Chapter 12

- Imagine a world without color. What color would you miss most?
- What value, if any, is there to Sameness?

Chapter 13

- Do you agree with Jonas that people have to be protected from wrong choices?
- As Jonas continues his training, he often finds himself angry with his groupmates and his family. Why?
- The Giver says that without memories, knowledge is meaningless. What does he mean?

Chapter 14

- Do you agree that painful memories are made easier when they are shared?
- Do you think it’s fair that one person in the community—The Receiver—should have to be burdened and pained by memories so that no one else is?

Chapter 15

- Why do you think The Giver asks Jonas to forgive him?

Chapter 16

- The Giver gives Jonas many good memories. What are some of *your* best memories?
- Do you think the elderly should be part of the community, or separate, as in Jonas's community?
- Do you think Jonas's parents love him? Do you think they know what love is?
- Do you agree with Jonas that things could be different? How?

Chapter 17

- Why didn't the game of good guys and bad guys that Jonas's friends play seem harmless to Jonas anymore? Should Jonas have asked them to stop playing it? Why or why not?

Chapter 18

- Do you think Rosemary sounds like she was or wasn't brave?
- Why did The Giver seem distracted after telling Jonas to stay away from the river?

Chapter 19

- What do you think of what Jonas's community calls "release"? Were you surprised at what it was?
- How do you think this new knowledge will affect Jonas?

Chapter 20

- Jonas knows that if his plan fails, he could be killed. But he believes that if he stays, his life is no longer worth living. Do you agree?
- Do you think The Giver should go with Jonas or stay? Why?

Chapter 21

- How does Jonas show that he understands that the meaning of everything is to care about others?
- How do you think The Giver will feel when he realizes Jonas is gone? How will Jonas's friends and family feel?
- Why is the community so desperate to get Jonas back?

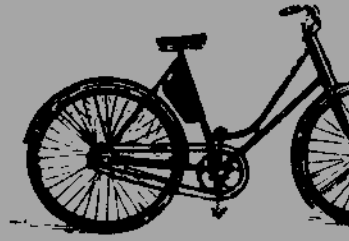
Chapter 22

- Jonas briefly wonders whether he made the wrong choice when he decided to run away. What do you think?

Chapter 23

- Although most of the memories have left Jonas, the feelings have not. Why do you think that is?
- How do you think the story ends?

Plot: What's Happening?



"Jonas,' she said, speaking not to him alone but to the entire community of which he was a part, 'you will be trained to be our next Receiver of Memory. We thank you for your childhood.'"

—Chief Elder, *The Giver*

The *Giver* is the story of a boy who lives in a seemingly perfect futuristic world and what he does when he learns the great price his community pays for such perfection.

The story starts with eleven-year-old Jonas worrying about the upcoming Ceremony of Twelve. This ceremony is when the Elevens are given their Assignments.

One evening before the Ceremony, Jonas's father, a Nurturer, brings home a newchild who needs extra nurturing. Jonas's father hopes to help the baby, named Gabe, grow and learn to sleep, so that the Committee will not vote to release him.

The Ceremony holiday finally arrives. The first day begins with the Naming of the newchildren. Gabe is not at the ceremony;

Jonas's father received permission from the Committee to allow the newchild an additional year to reach the proper milestones.

The Ceremony of Twelve begins the next day after lunch. The Chief Elder makes the Assignments, but skips Jonas when it is his turn. After she makes the final Assignment, the Chief Elder apologizes to Jonas. Then she says that he has been "selected to be our next Receiver of Memory." She says that the Committee failed in their last selection ten years ago, and has been very careful with this one. She explains that the job, the most honored in the community, requires that The Receiver be alone and apart, and that Jonas will need a tremendous amount of courage because he will be faced "with pain of a magnitude that none of us here can comprehend because it is beyond our experience." Jonas wonders if he has this courage.

The Chief Elder says that The Receiver must also have the Capacity to See Beyond. Jonas looks out at the crowd, and something happens to their faces—they change, the way an apple he had tossed with his friend had changed. He thinks that maybe he does have this quality.

That night, Jonas reads the rules and instructions for his Assignment. The last rule—you may lie—frightens him. "What if *others—adults—*had, upon becoming Twelves, received in their instructions the same terrifying sentence?" Did others lie?

Jonas begins his training the next day. The Receiver tells Jonas, "My job is to transmit to you all of the memories I have within me. Memories of the past. . . . Memories of the whole world."

Jonas is confused. "I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now." "There's much more," The Receiver tells him. "There's all that goes beyond—all that is Elsewhere—and all that goes back, and back, and back."

The current Receiver becomes The Giver and gives Jonas his first memory: that of a sled ride down a hill. When Jonas asks why snow, sleds, and hills no longer exist, The Giver explains that they became obsolete when the community decided to go to Sameness.

The next day, Jonas notices his friend Fiona's hair change, the way the apple and the faces in the crowd at the Ceremony had changed. Jonas asks The Giver about it. The Giver explains that Jonas is starting to see the color red. Jonas learns that there once were a lot of colors but that the community made the choice to do away with them to go to Sameness.

As he continues his training, Jonas feels frustrated to realize how few choices he has. He knows that it's safer this way, but it bothers him nonetheless.

Meanwhile, the newchild still isn't sleeping well, so Jonas tries taking him into his room at night. The first time Gabe fusses, Jonas rubs the baby's back. As he does so, he remembers a wonderful sail The Giver gave to him. The memory begins to fade, and Jonas realizes he is giving the memory to the baby. It helps Gabe sleep. Jonas does not tell The Giver that he has given away a memory.

The Giver gives Jonas many happy memories, but increasingly painful memories, too. Jonas begins to look at his family and groupmates differently. They have never seen color. They have never known pain. These thoughts make him feel very lonely. He asks The Giver why everyone can't have memories. "I think it would seem a little easier if the memories were shared," he says.

The Giver agrees. "But," he says, "then everyone would be burdened and pained. They don't want that. And that's the real reason The Receiver is so vital to them, and so honored. They selected me—and you—to lift that burden from themselves."

The Giver tells him that when The Receiver-in-training failed ten years ago, after only five weeks, the memories she had received were released, and everyone had access to them. "It was chaos," he says.

Jonas wonders aloud what would happen to the community if anything happened to him. He has been receiving memories for nearly a year. "If they lost *you*, with all the training you've had now, they'd have all those memories again themselves," The Giver says. "They wouldn't know how to deal with it at all."

"The only way *I* deal with it is by having you there to help me," Jonas says.

That gives The Giver an idea. "I suppose I could help the whole community the way I've helped you," he says. "It's an interesting concept. I need to think about it some more."

Jonas then tells The Giver that his father was going to release a newborn twin that morning. Jonas's concept of release is that the person is sent to Elsewhere. The Giver tells Jonas that he thinks he should watch the video of that release.

Jonas watches on the video screen as his father inserts a needle into a baby's forehead. He listens to his father's cheerful voice say, "All done. That wasn't so bad, was it?" He watches the baby die. His mind reels. "*He killed it! My father killed it!*"

Jonas refuses to go home that night. The Giver says he can spend the night with him. When Jonas rails against his father's actions, against all the people who perform releases, The Giver tells him, "They can't help it. *They know nothing.*" He explains that feelings are not part of the life they've learned, that he and Jonas are the only ones in the community who have feelings.

That evening, The Giver tells Jonas that "having you here with me over the past year has made me realize that things must change. . . . Now for the first time I think there might be a way." And they make a plan for The Giver to help Jonas to escape, so that the people will live with memories again.

Jonas wants The Giver to go with him, but his friend refuses. He says he must stay to help the community deal with the memories. "If you get away," The Giver tells Jonas, "if you get beyond, if you get to Elsewhere, it will mean that the community has to bear the burden themselves, of the memories you had been holding for them. I think they can, and that they will acquire some wisdom. But it will be desperately hard for them."

“Giver,” Jonas says. “You and I don’t need to *care* about the rest of them.” But as soon as he says that, he is ashamed, because “of course they needed to care. It was the meaning of everything.”

Jonas is sure the plan will work. But when he goes home, he learns that the Committee has decided to release Gabe the next morning. Jonas knows then that he has to flee right away, without The Giver’s help.

In the middle of the night Jonas straps Gabe into the child seat on the back of his father’s bicycle. Then he pedals away from the community, toward Elsewhere. Jonas’s only regret is that he does not get to say good-bye to The Giver.

Jonas rides hard through the night, knowing that daylight will bring knowledge of his and Gabe’s disappearance. At dawn he stops in an isolated field where he and Gabe eat and then sleep.

They go on like this for days, bicycling through the night, sleeping during the day. Jonas’s greatest fear is the search planes. Whenever he hears them, he holds Gabe and hides.

One day the planes stop looking for them. The landscape changes, too. It is no longer flat and smooth. Now it is bumpy. Jonas feels “simple moments of exquisite happiness” when he sees wildflowers, birds, the wind shifting in the trees. But he is also very afraid now, afraid that he and Gabe will starve. He wonders briefly if, finally given a choice to make, he made the wrong one. Then, when he thinks of Gabe, he knows he had no choice. He had to flee.

Jonas and Gabe continue their journey, hungry and increasingly cold. Jonas feels certain that he is reaching his destination. They come to a place where it snows. He can no longer ride his bike. And it is so hard to walk. Jonas thinks of just lying down with the baby in the soft cold, of giving up. But he won't. He tries to call back some of the memories of warmth that The Giver had given to him, but they are weak. Those memories are almost all lost to him now, returned to the community.

Then, as he trudges up a snow-covered hill carrying the baby inside his tunic, he feels he knows what is waiting for him at the top. "We're almost there, Gabriel," he tells the baby. Somehow Jonas knows that a sled will be waiting at the top of the hill, and it is. Jonas climbs on and, holding tight to Gabriel, sets off down the hill. He sees lights in the distance. And, for the first time, he hears people singing.

Thinking about the plot

- In what ways did Jonas's world seem perfect?
- What were some of the things missing from Jonas's world?
- What are some of the reasons that Jonas felt he had to run away?