

The Giver  
by  
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EXT. COMMUNITY -- MORNING

A neat, orderly community of 3,500, probably somewhere in North America, some time in the future.

There are no streets because there are no cars. Walking paths and bike lanes lead from houses to offices. There is no commercial zone because there is no commerce: no billboards, no stores, no advertising clutter. The place has the air of a beautiful, well-tended college campus. Homes are futuristic yet inviting, clean yet lived-in, displayed amid lovely grassy quads of flat open space.

Adults and kids, off to work and school, walk or ride their bicycles at a relaxed clip through the warm, clear morning air. Street cleaners and landscape workers are busy at their work. Friendly black-clad Security Officers keep an eye on things and nod at passersby. Peace reigns. Life is good.

**NOTE ON STYLE:** Although everyone's clothes are different, they all look as though they were ordered from the same catalog. The crisp suit of the office worker and the coveralls of the street sweeper both bear the stamp of a single design team, and each looks comfortable and stylish.

**NOTE ON LOOKS:** There are as many different faces as there are people. However, almost everyone in the community has dark hair, dark eyes and a coffee-with-cream complexion, as if a blending of all the races of our contemporary world.

**NOTE ON COLORS:** All colors, in their photography, are muted to mere suggestion, almost to the point of invisibility.

EXT. LANE - MORNING

Amid all this, we find a boy, JONAS, 11, walking down a lane, carrying his schoolbooks. He has dark hair like everyone else, but his eyes are a startling in their crystalline clarity. He lopes along, alert, perceptive and very content.

Suddenly, a PIERCING SCREAM SHATTERS THE AIR as a HARRIER JET APPEARS OVERHEAD, HOVERING TOO LOW, EVERY RIVET VISIBLE.

Jonas drops his books, HITS THE DIRT and COVERS HIS HEAD WITH HIS HANDS. Everyone in the area STOPS WHAT HE OR SHE IS DOING and DASHES TO ANY SHELTER AVAILABLE, into buildings, under awnings, beneath bushes and benches.

INT. HARRIER JET - SAME

As the jet climbs, we see, briefly, from the PILOT'S POV, the LAYOUT OF the community.

We see clusters of houses in the residential zone connected by pathways to the community center. Office buildings and factories are placed on the outskirts of the community, near to the roads that cut through large swaths of agricultural land to connect this community to other communities, which are separated by winding man-made rivers. The layout has an organic, natural flow to it, no grids, like a living thing.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - CONTINUOUS

As the roar of the jet subsides, Jonas peeks out from under his arm to see if the world has ended. On the now-silent quad, the only signs of life are a number of abandoned bicycles, dropped by their owners in panic. On one, the front wheel still revolves slowly.

A nearby SPEAKER crackles to life, a friendly, calming voice.

SPEAKER

Good morning. No cause for alarm.  
It's been reported that the jet you  
just saw was being flown by a pilot-  
in-training. He misread his nav-  
computer, made a wrong turn.

(then, almost a joke)

He will, of course, be released.

Jonas gathers his books and watches as the pathways fill up again, people emerging from doorways and from under shelter, joking and smiling as they dust themselves off, utterly forgetting the terror of a minute earlier. \*

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - DAY

JONAS and ASHER, 12, bike to school along the bank of a man-made river. And though every attempt has been made to make them look similar, their distinct personalities still emerge; Jonas's clothes are clean and pressed while Asher's look as if he has slept in them. Jonas bikes in a steady, straight line but Asher is all over the place; he weaves back and forth, pops wheelies, rides without hands. We join them in mid-conversation. \*

ASHER

Well whaddaya wanna do?

JONAS

I 'unno, never thought about it --

ASHER

If you don't know how'll they know?

JONAS  
What, you know what you wanna do?

ASHER  
Probably get Trash Collector, maybe Farmer. Know what'd be cool? Demolition, get to blow stuff up. Or jet pilot, eeeyyowwm! Heat-seeking missile launchers! Bam!

JONAS  
Yeah, that'd be cool. You scared?

ASHER  
'bout the Ceremony? Nuh-uh. You?

JONAS  
Huh-uh.

ASHER  
You are.

JONAS  
I'm not --

He makes an aggressive move toward Asher, who takes off, laughing. They RACE good-naturedly along the path, until --

-- they come to a CONSTRUCTION SITE for a NEW BRIDGE, a wide, shining silvery arch spanning the river. Right beside the new bridge we see the OLD BRIDGE, a narrow brick arch. The old bridge is guarded by a pair of black-suited SECURITY OFFICERS, but the new bridge is as yet unattended.

Asher stops and gazes at the site, a boy's paradise of scaffolding, earth mounds and unguarded construction equipment. There is a large sign that reads "DANGER, CONSTRUCTION, KEEP OUT, but to Asher it might as well read "COME IN, FUN AWAITS." Jonas reads his mind.

JONAS  
Asher...

Asher rides off the sidewalk, toward an earth mound.

JONAS  
Din't you see the sign? This is against the rules --

ASHER  
Just keep going if you're scared.

Jonas sighs, looks to see no one's watching, then follows. Asher zooms up one side of a dirt mound and down the other. He drops his bike and climbs over the scaffolding at the base of the new bridge's anchorage.

ASHER

Hey Jonas, c'mere, lookit this!

Jonas looks worried. He looks from one end of the new bridge to the other. Its wide graceful arc is irresistible, especially compared to the rather stumpy, humpbacked old bridge beside it. He carefully parks his bike and climbs over the scaffolding to join Asher.

EXT. UNDERSIDE OF BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Asher looks up at the underside of the bridge. The exterior is a smooth, sleek, unbroken arch, except for ONE METAL PLATE that has come loose, exposing the inner structure. Without hesitation, Asher leaps up and clambers inside the hole.

JONAS

Asher! Hey, don't -- Asher!

Jonas carefully climbs up the mound and peers into the hole.

INT. UNDERSIDE OF BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jonas looks up and sees Asher climbing around the interior of the bridge, a spider-web of criss-cross struts and cables.

JONAS

We can't go in here, I -- Wow.

ASHER

Cool?

JONAS

Definitely.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER (O.S.)

Hey! You!

Jonas and Asher look at each other.

JONAS/ASHER

Uh-oh.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Jonas and Asher, in a dead panic, high-tail it out of the site as a burly CONSTRUCTION WORKER calls after them.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER  
I catch you playing here again,  
I'll call the Security Force!

ASHER  
Ha! Right!

JONAS  
Asher --

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Jonas and Asher, pedalling like mad, arrive at their school, a spiffy, modern, thoroughly cool-looking building. The front sidewalk is filled with parked bikes and a STARTING BELL RINGS as they pull up; they are LATE.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A large, airy classroom. Big skylights let in plenty of light. There are no more than twelve students. Their desks are broad and sleek; each one has a pop-up flat computer screen. A wonderful environment in which to learn. Education is apparently a strong priority in this society; it would be hard to imagine a school better funded.

A clear glass video screen at the front of the room reads "CIVICS." A large ANT FARM has been set up in the center of the room for the kids' edification. They put their noses to the glass to see the tireless, industrious insects better. The INSTRUCTOR, a good-looking young man in his 30s, walks around the group as he talks.

INSTRUCTOR  
And just as each ant does its  
specially-chosen job for the good  
of the colony, each of you will do  
your specially-chosen job for the  
good of the community. Think of  
the Chief Elder as the Queen Ant --

The kids giggle at this notion. Just then, the door bursts open and Jonas and Asher crash in. Everyone turns and looks.

INSTRUCTOR  
Well look who decided to join us.

JONAS  
I apologize for being late and  
disrupting class.

ASHER  
It was my fault, sir --

INSTRUCTOR  
Somehow that does not surprise me.

JONAS  
We didn't --

INSTRUCTOR  
Please, let's have Asher tell it.  
We all love his way with words.

The kids stifle laughter. Asher smiles in spite of himself.

ASHER  
We, we went by the new construction  
site and I, I got distraught --

INSTRUCTOR  
Did you.

JONAS  
He means --

INSTRUCTOR  
Jonas, please. Asher, precision of  
language; do you mean "distracted?"

ASHER  
Yeah that's right, I 'polgize --

JONAS  
I apologize too sir, I tried --

INSTRUCTOR  
The Vice-Principal will discuss it  
with you later. Apology accepted.

They go to their seats. Jonas trades glances with FIONA, an attractive girl with an ethereal face and pale red hair. Her look says "Are you okay?" And his says "I don't know yet."

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Recess. The kids run, chase, play ball. In a large grassy area, a group of kids, including Fiona and Asher, play what we would recognize as Cowboys and Indians, shouting and whooping and shooting each other with imaginary rifles. \*

The VICE-PRINCIPAL, a stern unctuous sort, 40s, talks to Jonas over crossed arms. \*

VICE-PRINCIPAL

We expect this from Asher, but you, you're one of our top students. \*

JONAS

I know sir, I apologize, I tried -- \*

VICE-PRINCIPAL

Rules are rules. And rules matter. \*

JONAS

I know that, sir. Do you think this will affect my Assignment? \*

VICE-PRINCIPAL

Well. I sincerely hope not. \*

ON JONAS: gulp.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

Fiona and Asher have just come from the pretend battlefield. They talk the situation over with Jonas; he is still worried. \*

ASHER

I think you're just bein' a weenie. \*

JONAS

C'mon, this is serious --

A SPEAKER on a lamppost crackles to life.

SPEAKER

Attention all students. The New Bridge is not a playground. For your own safety, do not play on or around the site of the New Bridge.

Jonas looks worried, but Asher just rolls his eyes.

FIONA

The Ceremony is tomorrow, they  
already picked your Assignment,  
they're not gonna change it now --

ASHER

Hey, you see that guy?

The others turn to look. At the edge of the playground,  
seated on a bench, leaning back, arms folded, is a BEARDED  
ELDER, scrutinizing Jonas through narrowed eyes.

FIONA

's just an Elder, they're around a  
lot these days 'cause of --

ASHER

Yeah, but he's staring. At Jonas.  
Got a secret admirer, man.

JONAS

Stop it, that's not funny, I --

Just then, Jonas sees a little kid dash to retrieve a ball.  
As the kid tosses it in the air, it FLICKERS INTO AN INTENSE,  
BRIGHT, SATURATED RED. Jonas does a double take, unsure of  
what he's seen. When he looks again, it's a normal ball.

JONAS

Did you see that?

FIONA

See what?

JONAS

That ball. It, it changed.

ASHER

What?

JONAS

The ball, it, I don't know, it --

He looks over to see the BEARDED ELDER now LEANING FORWARD,  
STARING INTENTLY AT JONAS, BROW FURROWED. Jonas is taken  
aback. Asher gives Fiona a mock parental look.

ASHER

I think Jonas needs a time out.

EXT. JONAS'S HOUSE - EVENING

A white-suited FOOD DELIVERY MAN delivers a stack of trays to JONAS'S DAD, 40s, a round-faced man in a loose-fitting smock.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- EVENING

The interior of the house is cozy and warm. The furniture has a timeless elegance about it that keeps it from being austere, sort of a Futurist Shaker style.

MOM, 40s, Jonas, and LILY, 7, sit at the dining-room table. Mom is a short-haired, sharp-looking woman dressed in a dignified suit. Lily is fidgety and unkempt, she can't stop worrying her pigtails. DAD comes in with the stack of trays.

DAD

Dinner is served!

He puts the trays on the table. Mom distributes them. When the trays are opened, they reveal healthy, fresh, balanced, vegetarian meals without a trace of flavor.

MOM

Mm, looks good.

As the family digs in --

DAD

Who wants to do Feelings first?

Lily SITS UP and squirms impatiently. Dad smiles.

DAD

Anybody? Volunteers?

LILY

Da -- ad --

DAD

Okay, Lily-billy, you're up.

Lily gives a big smile and clears her throat.

LILY

My Feeling today was Anger.

DAD

Oo, Anger. What happened?

LILY

There was a group of Sevens?  
Visiting from another community,  
and one boy wouldn't wait his turn  
at the slide, and I felt anger, and  
I made my hand into a fist, like  
this.

She demonstrates, carefully curling her short, soft little  
fingers into a tiny fist. Mom and Dad smile and nod.

MOM

Why do you think he did that?

LILY

'cause he was an animal.

JONAS

Pff, like you've seen an animal --

LILY

Like you have --

MOM

Okay, okay --

(then, to Lily)

The boy was from another community?

LILY

Yeah --

MOM

So he was new here.

LILY

Yeah --

MOM

Do you think maybe he didn't know  
the rules of your playground?

LILY

(thinks)

Maybe --

MOM

Do you think maybe he felt a little  
awkward, didn't know how to ask?

LILY

(guilt sinking in)

Maybe --

MOM

And how do you feel about him now?

LILY

Mm -- a little sorry for him?

DAD

Good for you. Me, I had a very momentous day, I have to say.

MOM

Mm, momentous. Do tell.

DAD

New baby at the Center. Sweet little guy, ultra-cute. But he's not growing fast enough, and he's not sleeping like he should. So I talked to the administrators, and I think they're going to let me bring him home for a little while.

The kids gasp and smile at this; Mom seems less thrilled.

LILY

I'm getting a little brother?

MOM

Sweetie, you know the rules --

DAD

No, this would just be temporary --

LILY

What's his name? What's his name?

DAD

Well he's not official yet, but I snuck a peek at the list --  
 (Mom frowns at that)  
 -- and his name is Gabriel.

LILY

Gabriel. I like that name.

DAD

Okay. You're up, honey.

Mom sighs and looks a little tired.

MOM

My day was a little -- vexing.

DAD  
Mm. One of those.

MOM  
A repeat offender.

LILY  
What's a Pita Fender?

MOM  
Repeat Offender, is a person who can't stop breaking rules. And you know rules are rules. And there's no third chance. So --

DAD  
Mm. That's sad. I'm sorry.  
(then, to Jonas)  
Well kiddo, you're bringing up the rear. What did you feel today?

Jonas sits up and flexes his shoulders.

JONAS  
My day was...apprehensive.

DAD  
Oo, nice precision of language.

MOM  
Because you were late for school?

JONAS  
You know about that?

Mom puts down her fork and folds her napkin.

MOM  
Mm. I think this topic requires some closer attention.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mom, Dad and Jonas talk in the living room, sitting close together on the couch, having a real family heart-to-heart.

MOM  
We don't care about the bridge.

DAD  
I don't even know why they built that thing, our bridge is fine.

MOM

The bridge isn't important. What's important is you slipping up.

DAD

Yeah, what's goin' on, big guy?

JONAS

I 'unno, I guess I'm just worried, y'know, about the Celebration --

Mom and Dad exchange looks.

MOM

Mm.

DAD

Of course you're worried. 'Cause, "how do they know what I want to do for the rest of my life?" Right?

JONAS

How do they know?

DAD

Well, they watch you, and they see what you're good at -- like me, they could see that I loved taking care of Newchildren --

JONAS

But if I break the rules --

MOM

Well, rules are rules --

JONAS

But Asher breaks rules all the time, and his grades are bad, everything is a joke with him --

DAD

I'm sure the Elders will pick something right for Asher.

JONAS

Are they ever wrong?

DAD

How do you mean?

JONAS

I mean, do they ever give someone  
an Assignment and it's just wrong?

Dad and Mom exchange another glance: how to put this?

DAD

Well Jonas, the Elders are the  
smartest people we have, they --

JONAS

But they must make mistakes, they --

MOM

Honey. I know you're worried about  
the Ceremony, and that's fine.  
Because you're right, things will  
change. You're put into a training  
group, a whole new set of friends --

JONAS

But I'll always be friends with  
Asher, right?

MOM

Yes. Of course. And you should  
try to stay friends with Asher.

Jonas is a little confused: why would she put it like that?  
What's wrong with Asher? Dad reads his expression.

DAD

There's nothing wrong with Asher,  
all your mom's saying is --

MOM

-- a whole new world will open up,  
trust me, when I went into training  
for Law, it was so exciting --

JONAS

Will I still get to play?

MOM

I think what you'll find is that,  
after a while, playtime won't  
interest you so much --

This visibly distresses Jonas. Dad smooths him over.

DAD

Of course, at my job I play every day. Peek-a-boo, Hug-the-Teddy -- play doesn't stop after age Twelve.

He reaches out and affectionately ruffles Jonas's hair. Just then, Lily appears in the doorway, in her pajamas.

LILY

This is certainly a very long private conversation, and certain people need their comfort object.

Dad smiles and takes Lily's stuffed elephant down from a shelf. He goes to her and picks her up.

DAD

Here you go, Lily-billy. Bed-bed. Big day tomorrow.

Dad carries Lily out of the room. Jonas and Mom look at each other, smile and sigh.

JONAS

Does she know that she loses that thing when she turns Nine?

MOM

She'll find out soon enough.

Just then, the DOORBELL chimes. Mom looks at her watch.

MOM

Who the --

She gets up to answer the door. Jonas follows.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, ENTRANCEWAY -- NIGHT

Jonas and his Mom are beaten to the front door by Dad.

DAD

I've got it, sweetie.

He opens the door to greet a harried, exasperated young female NURTURER, a co-worker of his, carrying a plastic baby-carrier. An infant HOWL emits from the carrier.

DAD

Dinah, good evening.

NURTURER

Hi, I'm sorry to bother you so late, but he's really bad tonight --

DAD

That's all right, I'll take him.

NURTURER

Sorry --

DAD

It's okay, thanks.

He takes the howling carrier and closes the door. He smiles sheepishly to Mom, who gives him a steely look. Jonas and Lily are too interested in the carrier to notice.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dad brings the carrier over to the couch and sets it down. Everyone gathers to look.

LILY

Is that Gabriel? Is that him?

MOM

Lily, don't get too close --

DAD

Hang on, I'll show you --

He slides open a cover on the carrier, revealing the flushed, unhappy little squalling face of GABRIEL.

LILY

Oo! Listen to him go!

Gabriel howls at Dad, Mom, and Lily, his tiny fingers quivering. Then, when he sees Jonas, he suddenly STOPS AND STARES, with that look of amazement that infants have, and we see his ICY CLEAR EYES.

LILY

He's got eyes like Jonas!

MOM

Lily! You know better than that --

LILY

I 'pologize, but he does --

Gabriel stares at Jonas and grasps a stuffed hippo. Jonas gazes into his piercing eyes. Lily stretches to see him.

LILY

What's his comfort object called?

Dad consults a tag on the toy.

DAD

Let's see -- "hippo."

JONAS

Pff, the names they come up with --

LILY

He's so cute! I love babies. I wanna be a birthmother.

Mom reacts as if Lily said "I wanna be a prostitute."

MOM

Lily! Don't say that.

LILY

Natasha at the birthing center says the birthmothers get great food 'n they all sit around, play games --

MOM

For three years, then it's the work farms until they go into the House of the Old. That what you want?

LILY

(shrugs, oh well)  
I guess not.

DAD

(again, saving the day)  
Birthmothers don't get to spend time with their babies anyway. You want to work where I do.

LILY

(has already moved on)  
Hello Gabriel! Look! He yawned!  
C'n I put him to sleep?

MOM

Not tonight, sweetie.  
(then, pointedly)  
That's Dad's job.

Dad grins apologetically. Gabe gazes into Jonas's eyes.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - AFTERNOON

Jonas rides his bike up to the HOUSE OF THE OLD, a peaceful, serene building set within a stand of cypress trees, ringed with gardens of geraniums and tulips.

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - AFTERNOON

Jonas carries a stack of towels down a clean, white, airy corridor within the House of the Old. Elderly people are assisted by kindly, patient orderlies.

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD, BATHING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jonas carries the towels into the large, domed, white-tiled BATHING ROOM. The air is heavy with steam. Caretakers gently bathe elderly folk in dozens of spotless tubs.

Jonas becomes apprehensive as he walks across the room past the bathers. His breath becomes thick and labored, his heart thumps impatiently as he approaches a tub where A GIRL bathes by herself. His eyes wide, his every step echoes on the tile. The girl TURNS and reveals herself to be FIONA, Jonas's classmate. Jonas RECOILS and gasps in surprise. He averts his eyes, but Fiona only gives him a sly smile.

FIONA

Hey Jonas. Wanna get in?

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Jonas AWAKENS in his bed in the cool morning light. Whew -- it was just a dream.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Breakfast. The morning of the Ceremony. Jonas, Mom, Dad and Lily at the table, dressed in their best clothes. Dad tends to Gabe, who fusses in a bassinet.

JONAS

And we were in the House of the Old, in the bathing room.

MOM

You dreamed of your volunteer work?

JONAS

But this was different. 'Cause  
Fiona was naked. And she asked me  
to take a bath with her.

Dad chokes on his food. Mom gives him a look.

MOM

How did you feel when she did that?

JONAS

I 'unno. Happy. Scared. My chest  
hurt in a weird way. Am I okay?

Mom and Dad exchange glances.

DAD

Well son, I need to get to the  
Center before the Ceremony. Your  
Mom will explain this to you.

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Jonas and Mom sit on the edge of Jonas's bed.

MOM

Have they taught you Stirrings?

JONAS

In Health they said when you get  
Stirrings you have to get treated.

MOM

Well, this dream you had about  
Fiona, that's part of Stirrings.

JONAS

Do I have to go away?

MOM

(a laugh, then)  
No, the treatment is just this.

She hands him a bottle of pills.

MOM

One a day, every morning.

JONAS

For how long?

MOM  
 (shrugs)  
 Rest of your life.

JONAS  
 So it's just another pill.

MOM  
 Just another pill.

She ruffles his hair. He smiles.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Mom tries to fix Lily's hair-ribbons, but she is too jittery.  
 Jonas buttons his jacket.

LILY  
 What if I don't wanna be an Eight?

MOM  
 Come on Lily, hold still.

JONAS  
 Big responsibilities when you turn  
 Eight. You get a pocket.

LILY  
 If they make you a Pilot, will you  
 take me flying?

JONAS  
 Sure, 'n I'll make you a special  
 parachute. Take you up to 'bout  
 20,000 feet and --

MOM  
 Jonas --

JONAS  
 It's just a joke, Mom. I don't  
 wanna be a Pilot anyway. I just  
 hope I -- I, I dunno --

MOM  
 Would you stop worrying. Please.  
 (then, re Lily's hair)  
 Okay. Good enough. We need to go,  
 I want to get a good seat.

EXT. LANE - DAY

Mom and Jonas bike through community toward the Auditorium. Lily rides in a seat on the back of Mom's bike. The lanes are filled with other citizens, all dressed up nice, all heading toward the center of community; some bike, others walk in family groups. Streetlights have banners hanging from them reminding people of the Celebration.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The Auditorium is decked out in banners and crepe. Literally everyone in community is here, milling about, greeting each other, chatting, holding babies. The feeling is one of a church social. There are a number of Security Officers on duty, watching over the procession. Mom and Jonas pull up and get off their bikes. Jonas sees Asher and some other boys chatting nearby. Asher is wearing his best clothes, but they are still ill-fitting and rumped, shirt untucked, shoelaces untied. Jonas starts over to them, but Mom stays him.

MOM

Jonas -- don't get into trouble.

JONAS

Mo-om --

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The auditorium is filling up. Each age group of children sits together, Sixes with Sixes, Sevens with Sevens, etc. Jonas and Asher have seats right near the stage.

ASHER

Good seats, huh? I could hit the Chief Elder with a spitball.

PIERRE, a prissy apple-polisher, turns and scowls. Asher scowls right back. FIONA comes and sits down next to Jonas.

FIONA

Hey Jonas.

JONAS

Hey Fiona.

FIONA

Hey Asher.

ASHER

Hey.

In one section of the room, Jonas sees Mom sit with the other Legal Officers, Lily sits with the Eights, Dad with the Nuturers, each one holding a baby, Dad holding Gabe. He smiles at Jonas and makes Gabe wave his tiny hand.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Everyone is in place. The lights are down. The CHIEF ELDER, a handsome, statuesque woman in her 50s, walks out on stage to warm, fervent applause and takes the podium.

CHIEF ELDER

It's been another good year. Our new bridge is almost complete, our food distribution system is better than ever, and our Council has once again gone an entire year without making a single decision.

Laughter and applause as a light shines on the community Council, who laugh right along with the crowd at the good-natured rib.

CHIEF ELDER

But you didn't come here to hear speeches. This is your day.  
(then, over applause)  
Let's begin at the beginning with the presentation of Newchildren!

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Some time into the Ceremony, a YOUNG COUPLE approaches the podium, trembling like the proverbial leaves. The Chief Elder reads their names from a list.

CHIEF ELDER

Robert and Mary, I present: Bruno.

One of the Nurturers steps forward, holding a darling infant boy. The young couple beam as they take their new baby. They hold it up for the crowd to see and they applaud.

Next, FIONA's family steps up to the podium.

CHIEF ELDER

James, Beatrice and Fiona, I present: Rosemary.

A huge burst of applause as a Nurturer steps forward and presents a stout, flailing baby girl to Fiona's parents. This being their second baby, they are a bit more calm, but no less happy than the last couple.

IN THE TWELVES, Asher leans over to Jonas.

ASHER

What's so special about her?

Pierre turns around to instruct Asher.

PIERRE

My father says it's been a while  
since we had a Rosemary.

Asher makes a face at Pierre. On stage, Fiona looks for Jonas in the auditorium. Jonas waves, and Fiona smiles. Asher rolls his eyes and scrunches down in his seat.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

And now, it's Lily's group, fifty Sevens, all standing on a group of risers. When they are shoulder to shoulder, the similarities in their haircuts is a little more disturbing.

LILY, onstage amid her class, casts a covetous eye upon the rows of bicycles awaiting distribution.

The Chief Elder calls each child by name.

CHIEF ELDER

Michelle. Piotr. Dora.

As their names are called, each one of the Sevens steps forward and receives a new jacket from a committee member, along with a scroll and a firm handshake.

With the Twelves, Fiona comes back to sit next to Jonas.

JONAS

Congratulations.

FIONA

Thanks.

JONAS

Rosemary's a nice name.

FIONA

Isn't it?

Up on stage, Lily accepts her jacket and handshake with a big smile. She does a showy little curtsy, which gets a big laugh from the crowd.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Now, the Tens are up on stage, lined up neatly in rows.

CHIEF ELDER  
And now, the Haircuts.

A team of PARENTS with SCISSORS AND COMBS come out of the wings and begin to cut their children's hair.

INT. AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE

The Twelves file along backstage, waiting to go on. Parents, stagehands and other kids mill around. Asher leans over to whisper to Jonas.

ASHER  
I heard about a guy, thought he was going to be an engineer? They made him a Sanitation Laborer.

JONAS  
That never happened. They just say that to scare little kids.

ASHER  
No man, it's true. And he jumped into the river, swam to Elsewhere. Nobody ever saw him again.

Fiona appears alongside the two boys.

FIONA  
Get real, Asher.

\*

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

And now we are in the midst of the Ceremony of Twelve. The Twelves are all in their places on the risers, all looking very grown up in their nice clothes. Asher is in the front row. Jonas and Fiona stand next to each other. PIERRE stands on the other side of Jonas.

IN THE CROWD, Jonas's family now sits together. Dad puts his arm around an anxious Mom. Lily is fidgety and bored.

AT THE PODIUM, The Chief Elder speaks to the crowd.

CHIEF ELDER

Today, we acknowledge differences.

(then, to the group)

All your training so far has been toward helping you fit in, but today we celebrate and honor the things that make you unique.

ON THE RISERS, Fiona whispers to Jonas.

FIONA

Good luck.

JONAS

You too.

Pierre turns and scowls at them.

PIERRE

Shh!

When his head turns back around, Fiona quickly sticks her tongue out at him. Jonas stifles a laugh, then looks down, startled. Fiona has reached over and taken his hand.

CHIEF ELDER

(to the crowd)

Here you see the scientists and leaders, the workers and birth-mothers of the future.

(then, a grin)

I think we're in good hands.

(pause for laugh)

Twelve-one: Madeline.

The first Twelve in the first row, Madeline, reacts as if she has been poked with a cattle-prod. Wide-eyed and trembling, she approaches the podium.

CHIEF ELDER

Madeline: Fish Hatchery Attendant.

Thank you for your childhood.

Applause. Madeline looks as though she can barely comprehend the words. An Elder presents her with a thick envelope and a Fish Hatchery Attendant badge, then ushers her offstage.

CHIEF ELDER

Inger: birthmother. Thank you for your childhood.

Less enthusiastic applause. Inger, a sturdy, affable-looking girl, smiles with relief and walks confidently over to the podium, where she receives a thick envelope and a handshake.

Asher turns around and makes an excited face at Jonas. Pierre stares at him until he turns back around.

CHIEF ELDER

Isaac: Instructor of Sixes. Thank you for your childhood.

Isaac, an affable brainiac-looking kid, pumps his fist "yes!" and trots over to the stage, where he gets his thick envelope and handshake; the Chief Elder gives Asher a sidelong glance.

CHIEF ELDER

Asher.  
(pause for laugh)  
Everyone likes Asher.

More laughter. Asher smiles at the attention and scratches his leg with his foot.

CHIEF ELDER

You might remember what Asher used to be like. Unruly, willful, careless. Thank goodness a little discipline put a stop to all that.  
(laughs)

Asher presented a unique challenge to the committee. They took quite a while to decide what Assignment might be appropriate for a boy of his unique talents.

(more laughs)

So I am pleased to present, Asher:  
Director of Recreation.

Delighted gasps and applause from the crowd. Asher saunters to the podium, one of his shoelaces flopping free. He gets his badge and envelope, then pumps his arms in the air like a champion boxer. The crowd warmly applauds. They love Asher.

CHIEF ELDER

(suppressing her delight)  
Thank you for your childhood.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

We're now about halfway through the group. It is Fiona's turn. She gives Jonas an anxious glance.

CHIEF ELDER

Fiona: Caretaker for the Old.  
Thank you for your childhood.

Jonas smiles and breaks out in applause; Fiona reacts as if she has just won an Oscar. She climbs down the risers, trembling with joy and relief. She gets her envelope and handshake and waves to her family.

Jonas stiffens and tries to put on a brave face. Now is the moment of truth. The Chief Elder looks at her list.

CHIEF ELDER

Pierre:

Pierre looks a little startled, but not as startled as Jonas.

CHIEF ELDER

Engineer. Thank you for your  
childhood.

Pierre looks at Jonas, confused, then walks over to the podium to get his badge and envelope. Jonas looks around, petrified. To whom can he turn?

IN THE CROWD, Mom and Dad look at each other, concerned. Lily tugs on Mom's sleeve.

LILY

They skipped him! Skipped Jonas!

A ripple of confusion spreads through the crowd.

ON JONAS as the sound in the Auditorium muffles to a dull smear and the faces in the crowd begin to swim.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

And now we are near the end of the Ceremony. Jonas still stands, alone and on the edge of tears, under the blazing lights. The Chief Elder reads the last name on her list.

CHIEF ELDER

Martin: Farmer. Thank you for your childhood.

Martin, a large, unremarkable boy, lumbers down the risers, shooting Jonas a look of concern before he crosses to the podium and gets his envelope and handshake, to scattered, unenthusiastic applause. Jonas bangs his hands together like a robot, trying to keep up appearances. And now there is an audible murmur in the crowd as it is clear that Jonas, for some reason, has been selected out of the group for some kind of terrible humiliation.

CHIEF ELDER

I sense some anxiety. You feel as though a mistake has been made.

(then, to Jonas)

Jonas, you must be mortified. I apologize for your anguish.

JONAS

(a distant squeak)

I 'cept your 'pology --

CHIEF ELDER

Will you come to me now?

Jonas walks to the podium as to the guillotine. The Chief Elder puts a loving arm around his quivering shoulders.

CHIEF ELDER

Jonas has not been assigned.

ON JONAS: "Not been assigned?" What the heck does that mean?

CHIEF ELDER

Jonas has been selected, to become our new Receiver of Memory.

A buzzing stir in the audience. Jonas's Mom and Dad look alarmed. Lily is beginning to see that something is wrong.

LILY

Did Jonas do something wrong?

CHIEF ELDER

As you all know, Receiver of Memory is the most important, most honored post in the community.

THE AUDIENCE gravely nods, while JONAS, bug-eyed and sweating, looks ready to pass out.

\*

## CHIEF ELDER

Such a selection is very rare. We only have one Receiver of Memory, and he must train his successor.

She gestures to a gallery where the Committee of Elders sits. Jonas follows her gesture and sees, sitting at the very edge of the gallery, apart from the others, the BEARDED ELDER, who we saw on the playground. He is unreadable; he seems neither pleased nor displeased with the announcement. Rather, he seems vaguely displeased with everything in the universe.

## CHIEF ELDER

We have watched Jonas very carefully, for many years, and we have determined that he has all the qualities a Receiver must have. Intelligence, Integrity, Courage, and, in time, Wisdom. For Jonas has the Capacity to See Beyond.

The audience now gives a gasp of awe. Jonas looks completely lost: whatever the Chief Elder is talking about, Jonas is positive that he doesn't have it.

## CHIEF ELDER

And while the office of Receiver carries with it great honor, it is also a great burden. The Receiver lives alone, apart from the everyone else. His task involves pain, real, physical pain.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

As if he didn't feel bad enough, that almost makes Jonas swoon. He looks out over the audience. Their faces, up until now a pale, ashen pink, now turn a ruddy, almost sunburnt red. The room begins to spin. The Chief Elder's words become blurry and distorted. Then, in a moment, the feeling passes and the illusion is gone.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

## CHIEF ELDER

Jonas: You will become our new Receiver of Memory. Thank you for your childhood.

\*

Jonas audibly GULPS. With sweaty, trembling hands he accepts his slim envelope and handshake.

A LONE MAN in the crowd STANDS UP and begins CHANTING.

## LONE MAN

JONAS. JONAS.

The man is joined by another man, then a woman, then a whole family. Soon, the whole community is STANDING AND CHANTING.

EVERYONE

JONAS. JONAS. JONAS. JONAS.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING

After the Ceremony, everyone gathers outside the Auditorium to chat in the cool evening air. Jonas looks at his Assignment Envelope. Asher comes by with his family, chucks Jonas on the shoulder, jerking him out of his reverie.

ASHER

Hey. Congratulations.

JONAS

Hey, you too. You got more applause than anyone else.

ASHER

Eh, what can I say? I'm a star.

He waves good-bye as his family goes off into the night. Jonas sees his FAMILY nearby and waves. His Mom and Dad smile and applaud, but Lily regards him solemnly, almost suspiciously, her thumb in her mouth. Jonas's Mom puts a hand on his shoulder to turn him toward home.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Jonas, Mom, Dad and Lily at dining table. Food uneaten. Mom and Dad look stricken, as if they had just found out that their son has been sentenced to die. Lily looks around at all the faces, but knows enough not to say anything.

MOM

Your father and I are...very proud.

DAD

Important job, very important. Mm.

Mom reaches over and puts her hand over his.

MOM

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

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonas, now in his pajamas, sits cross-legged on the bed and takes out the large, slim envelope that the Chief Elder gave him. He breaks the seal off it, opens it, and takes out a sturdy cardboard folder. He opens it. Inside is a single piece of paper; Jonas reads, hearing the Chief Elder's voice.

CHIEF ELDER (V.O.)

Jonas: Receiver of Memory. One: every day, after school, report directly to the Receiver of Memory for your training. Two: After training, go directly home. Three: you are exempted from all rules regarding rudeness. You may ask anyone anything you like and demand to receive answers.

Jonas peers closely at that last part. He looks out the window, wonders what it means.

From the next room, he hears MURMURING. It's his parents. He can barely make out their voices. \*

MOM (O.S.)

He'll be fine.

DAD (O.S.)

But last time --

MOM (O.S.)

We don't know what happened last time, no one does.

DAD (O.S.)

But she, the girl --

MOM (O.S.)

Jonas is not that girl.

DAD (O.S.)

Shh! He'll hear you --

Their voices drop below audibility. Jonas, thoroughly spooked, goes back to reading his Instructions.

CHIEF ELDER (V.O.)

Four: You may not discuss your training with anyone, ever. Five: You may no longer tell your dreams. \*

Jonas can feel his breath get shallow at that.

CHIEF ELDER (V.O.)

Six: You may not apply for release.

Jonas looks up again. What in the world is he getting into? He looks back at the paper. We ZOOM IN for a close-up of the final note: "SEVEN: YOU MAY LIE."

ON JONAS'S FACE: Fear. Confusion. Terror.

INT. SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

The next day. Jonas walks down the hall in school. The other kids avoid him like a leper. They avert their eyes and even change direction when they see him coming.

He turns a corner and sees Asher, now surrounded by a passel of kids, laughing and horsing around. He smiles.

JONAS

Hey Asher.

When the kids see that it's Jonas, they stop roughhousing and suddenly find things to look at across the hall. Asher cuts the tension with a joke.

ASHER

All Hail the Receiver!

He makes a mock bow of servitude. This cracks everyone up. Jonas tries to laugh along.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - AFTERNOON

Jonas and Fiona walk their bikes toward the House of the Old.

JONAS

Everyone is totally different now.

FIONA

Well, you've been singled out. Now everyone thinks you're special.

She reaches over, squeezes his hand, and whispers in his ear.

FIONA

Me, I always thought so.

It's like an electric shock. Jonas turns to look at her face as she gives him a soft, sexy smile and flips her hair out of her eyes. As she does, her hair suddenly FLICKERS into a vibrant red hue. Jonas stops, blinking in astonishment.

FIONA

What.

JONAS

Um. Nothing. Nothing.

They arrive at the House of the Old. Fiona takes a breath.

FIONA

Well. Don't want to be late.

\*

JONAS

Sure.

FIONA

If we finish at the same time, I'll ride home with you.

JONAS

Okay. Great.

Fiona gives Jonas a nervous smile and walks her bike up to the House of the Old. Jonas looks around to the side of the building and gulps hard.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - MOMENTS LATER

Jonas wheels his bike around back. There is a plain unmarked door tucked away in a shadowy alcove. Jonas parks his bike in the empty bike rack, looks at the door with some trepidation. He walks to the thick metal door. There is no handle. There is a button and a speaker next to it. He pushes the button. The speaker crackles to life. He hears the RECEPTIONIST, a young woman.

RECEPTIONIST (ON SPEAKER)

Yes?

JONAS

Um, hi, I'm, it's Jonas, I --

RECEPTIONIST (ON SPEAKER)

Come in.

The door buzzes and swings open. Jonas looks at the door with suspicion and enters.

INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

A small, clean anteroom. Another strong metal door. The receptionist stands up from her little counter and smiles.

RECEPTIONIST

Welcome, Receiver of Memory.

JONAS

Please, I'm just Jonas.

She smiles and pushes a button on a console. There is a buzz and the inner door clicks and swings open. Jonas gestures to the door questioningly.

JONAS

The, the doors, they --

RECEPTIONIST

Oh. Those are called "locks."

JONAS

Locks.

RECEPTIONIST

They keep the doors shut. The Receiver needs privacy.

She gestures for him to go in. Jonas takes a deep breath.

INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Jonas walks into the Receiver's living quarters. It is a large round room with a bed, desk, table and sofa, but unlike any we've seen so far. They are, we recognize, antique. Intricately carved stained wooden frames, thick dark leather upholstery, intensely baroque in comparison to the clean, light lines of the rest of the design in community. Walls are lined with floor-to-ceiling bookcases, thousands of books, all sizes, all genuine antiques with leather bindings and gilt-lettered spines. Jonas is so surprised and shocked by the decor that he almost doesn't see the RECEIVER, who sits at his desk, frowns, as he writes in a thick black book.

JONAS

G-good afternoon.

(silence)

I'm -- Jonas?

(no response)

I -- I'm here for my tr --

RECEIVER

BE QUIET.

Jonas freezes, terrified. The Receiver finishes writing in the book and shuts it with a slam.

JONAS

I'm, I'm sorry sir, I --

RECEIVER

No apologies. Not in this room.  
We don't have the time.

The Receiver gets up and hits a button on a remote. A large glass SCREEN lowers and is FILLED with VIDEO IMAGES from ALL OVER THE COMMUNITY. Offices, living rooms, hospital rooms, roadways, walkways and hallways. The entire spectrum of activity in the community is here to see. Jonas takes it in, impressed. Office workers shuffle papers at their desks, food service workers toil in kitchens, garbage collectors pick up trash. People stroll the lanes, children cavort on the playground, a Security Officer doffs his hat to a passing Birthmother. Then Jonas sees, on one screen, ASHER, talking to his trainer in a room somewhere.

JONAS

Hey, there's Asher.

RECEIVER

Yes. Today, he's learning how to  
organize recreational activities.

He points to another screen: there's Madeline at the Fish Hatchery, holding a wriggling salmon.

RECEIVER

And Madeline's learning about fish.

He points to another screen; MARTIN sits in a special classroom, talking to an Instructor.

RECEIVER

Martin is learning about farming --  
(then, turning)  
And you, Jonas, you will learn the  
secret history of the world.

Jonas looks from the screen to the Receiver. There is something incredible, and terrible, about it all. The screen gives the Receiver awesome power, and also makes him more than a little creepy, especially as the grey light bounces off his pallid, wrinkled features.

RECEIVER

These people, they wake, they work,  
they eat, they sleep. They grow  
old. And none of them, none of  
them, know anything. Except me.

(turning to Jonas)

And now you. And when I am gone,  
you, and you alone, will know.  
Why things are the way they are.

Jonas's eyes get big as his breath becomes shallow. He's not ready for this.

JONAS

How -- how will I know all that?

INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - LATER

The Receiver and Jonas sit on the sofa. The Receiver chooses his words very carefully.

RECEIVER

I -- give you -- memories.

JONAS

You -- You tell me about your life?

RECEIVER

Not my memories, the world's  
memories. From before you, before  
me, before the community --

JONAS

Before the, what does --

RECEIVER

I mean not just us, but generations  
before us. The whole world.

JONAS

I don't under --

RECEIVER

You will.

(then)

It's an important job, the most  
important in the community.  
Without us, the community would  
cease to function.

JONAS

But that -- how is that possible?  
If it's all right to ask.

RECEIVER

(waves away his concern)  
No, ask questions, that's good, I --  
(thinks, then)  
This community. This society. Is  
perfect. Do you understand?

JONAS

I --

RECEIVER

I mean that, in our society,  
everyone is cared for, everyone has  
a place, no one is "better" than  
anyone else, no one is lonely, no  
one is left behind.

Jonas looks confused.

JONAS

I -- guess I understand, but --

RECEIVER

(reminding himself)  
-- but you know nothing else, so --  
(beat, then)  
Things were not always like this.  
Things were not always perfect.

JONAS

(not grasping the concept)  
Really?

RECEIVER

And in order for the community to  
work as well as it does, it's  
vitally important that everyone but  
the Receiver remains ignorant of  
certain things.

JONAS

What kinds of things?

RECEIVER

Secrets. We keep secrets. We know  
things so that --  
(gesture to outside)  
-- they don't have to.  
(then)

(MORE)

\*

RECEIVER (cont'd)

As Receiver, you will gain a great deal, but you will also sacrifice a great deal. You will live alone. No one will understand you. You will be at the center of the community, but you will be completely apart from it.

(then)

The memories will show you things you never thought possible, bring you great knowledge and power. But they will also weigh you down, wear on you, sometimes you'll feel as though you're sledding downhill through deep snow.

JONAS

Like I'm what?

The Receiver looks about to chastise Jonas for insolence, then realizes his question is genuine.

RECEIVER

All right, we'll start there. Roll up your sleeves.

(Jonas hesitates)

Go on.

Jonas does, not taking his eyes off the Receiver.

RECEIVER

Okay. Now. There is no way I can prepare you for what is about to happen to you.

JONAS

What's about to happen to me?

RECEIVER

You'll have to trust me.

JONAS

What about to happen?

RECEIVER

Here we go.

The Receiver leans forward and reaches for Jonas's hands. Jonas recoils in fear; the Receiver must LUNGE FORWARD and GRAB Jonas's hands. Jonas's head WHIPS BACK as if he has been electrocuted.

## EXT. WOODS - DAY - MEMORY

Jonas stands, alone, in his shirtsleeves, atop a snow-covered hill in the middle of a dense wood. The winter sun is crackling and sharp through the trees. His feet are sunk deep in the snow. At his feet is a sled, classic red Flexible Flyer, pointed downhill, just aching for some little boy to come hop on it. Jonas approaches the sled with caution. He's acutely aware of his shoe's impact on the snow, sinking in up to mid-calf with every step. He gingerly sits down on the sled and takes up the ice-encrusted rope. The sled moves. Slowly at first, then picking up speed. The runners cut clear lines through the snow as the sled runs swiftly down a trail; trees whip past at terrific speed. The wind stings Jonas's face. He blinks with wonder as he hurtles, low to the ground, down through the snowy woods.

## INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - SAME

Jonas opens his eyes. The Receiver has taken his hands from Jonas's and now Jonas sees that he is back in his old world. He looks around in astonishment. The Receiver blinks, shakes his head and smiles, as though waking from a pleasant dream.

JONAS

What was that?!

RECEIVER

That was the memory of sledding downhill through deep snow.

He flexes his shoulder, as if working out a kink, and smiles.

RECEIVER

You know, it's been a very long time since I've given someone a memory. I'd forgotten how much fun it could be. So much, so much to share, no one to share it with.

(then)

Now that I've given it to you, I think, I feel a little bit lighter.

JONAS

You mean, since you gave it to me, you don't have it anymore?

RECEIVER

That's how it works. But that was only one memory of one sled on one hill on one day;

(MORE)

RECEIVER (cont'd)

I have a world of them in my head.  
I could give you a thousand and  
still have more.

JONAS

Can I do it again? I want to try  
to steer this time.

RECEIVER

Maybe later.

He gives Jonas a paternal slap on the knee.

RECEIVER

Let's go for a walk.

EXT. LANE - LATER

Jonas and the Receiver walk along one of the many lovely paths that course along through the community. Jonas bubbles over with excitement, and the Receiver is much more relaxed, almost happy. Security cameras look down on them from every lamp post and building corner.

JONAS

So we had hills and snow and sleds  
when you were a boy?

RECEIVER

Ha, no, that is a very old memory,  
from long ago.

JONAS

But what happened to all that?

RECEIVER

(shrugs)

Weather was too unpredictable, so  
we figured out how to make it nice  
all the time. Hills made it hard  
for vehicles to get around, so --

He stretches out his arm in a slow sweeping motion, as if leveling all the landscape.

RECEIVER

Sameness.

JONAS

But the snow, it was so, so fun.

RECEIVER

Well, there was plenty about life back then that was not fun. But this is a good start for today.

JONAS

You said that you've given memories to someone else?

RECEIVER

Oh. Never mind that.

JONAS

My instructions say "You may lie." Do you lie?

RECEIVER

(wry smile)

Mm. Good question.

(then)

Yes. I do. Often. To everyone. But. I will never lie to you.

JONAS

(nods, then)

How do I know that's not a lie?

RECEIVER

(a warm smile)

You will be very good at this job.

He ruffles Jonas's hair. Jonas smiles, pleased with the Receiver's approval.

JONAS

I can't wait to tell --

The Receiver stops him and fixes him in the eye.

RECEIVER

No. You may never discuss training. Instruction number four.

JONAS

Right. Well then, tomorrow.

RECEIVER

Tomorrow.

Jonas goes. As the Receiver watches him leave, a kind of sadness creeps into his features. Jonas stops and turns.

JONAS

I have a question. If I'm the Receiver, what are you?

RECEIVER

(thinks, then, smiling)  
I must be the Giver.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - DREAM \*

Jonas is back on the sled, coursing downhill, wind in his hair, breath puffing out in billowing clouds. But this time, FIONA, with STUNNING RED HAIR, is on the sled with him, her arms clasped tight around him, laughing gaily. As they pass by a tree, ASHER appears, throwing snowballs at them. The sled wipes out and Jonas and Fiona tumble off, jump up and gather snow to throw at Asher. The friends tussle in the snow, laughing.

Then, Jonas HEARS something, an unfamiliar sound, far off and indistinct, which we can barely discern as singing. As Fiona and Asher play, Jonas looks down the hill. Through the trees, far below, he glimpses some kind of structure, too far off to make out.

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Jonas wakes up in the ordinary light of his bedroom. Out his window, the flat, warm community goes about its routine.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- MORNING

Breakfast. Mom, Dad, Jonas, Lily and little Gabe, who seems particularly fussy this morning.

MOM

How was your sleep? Any dreams?

JONAS

Nope. Slept fine.

DAD

(of Gabe)

Wish this one would. He's so fussy at night.

Jonas looks at the fussing baby. Thinking.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Jonas comes in the door to the Giver's quarters. The Giver is hunched over a counter-top, back to Jonas. A book is open on the counter-top, and, in his robe, he looks like a wizard cooking up some elaborate potion.

JONAS

Good afternoon Giver, I --

Suddenly, a LARGE DOG, A ROTTWEILER, LEAPS UP FROM BEHIND THE COUCH AND RUNS TOWARD JONAS. Jonas recoils against the wall; the dog STOPS, SITS AND STARES AT HIM, GROWLING.

JONAS

What the -- what is that?!

GIVER

(not looking up)

That, young sir, is an animal.

JONAS

You have an animal?!

The dog BARKS THREATENINGLY when Jonas raises his voice.

GIVER

He doesn't like people yelling.

JONAS

I'm sorry, I just, I --

GIVER

He's called a "dog." Say hi.

JONAS

Say hi? He wants to kill me!

GIVER

Say "Hi, Rover!" Go ahead.

JONAS

Um, okay, I --

(then, to dog)

H-hi, er, "Rover."

The dog immediately stops growling, sits back and smiles. The Giver glances up from his work.

GIVER

He likes you. Pet him.

JONAS  
Pet him?

GIVER  
Pet him.

Jonas reaches out his hand. It goes STRAIGHT THROUGH THE DOG'S HEAD: it is ONLY A PROJECTION. The Giver LAUGHS.

JONAS  
What --

The Giver picks up a REMOTE from the counter and points it at the dog, which immediately FLICKERS OUT and DISAPPEARS.

GIVER  
Hologram. A projection, kind of a replacement. For something lost. Just a toy, to keep me company. I have all kinds.

He hits a button on his remote and a number of BEAUTIFUL THINGS suddenly POP IN AND OUT OF EXISTENCE, in various places around the room: a snowy owl, a charging rhinoceros, a towering giraffe, a cluster of butterflies, a miniature Eiffel Tower, a bust of Shakespeare, a Faberge egg. Jonas is stunned, overwhelmed. He sits down at the table.

JONAS  
I -- wow. Okay.

GIVER  
Okay. Close your eyes.

JONAS  
Is it another memory?

GIVER  
Better. Close 'em.

Jonas does. The Giver goes to him. His body language and demeanor is utterly transformed from the last time we saw him. Then, he was opaque, stern and angry; now, he seems sprightly and mischievous. He has a saucepan and a wooden spoon and he holds the spoon out for Jonas to smell.

GIVER  
Smell that?

JONAS  
Yes --

He puts the spoon in Jonas's mouth. Jonas's eyes open big.

JONAS  
What -- what is that?

GIVER  
It's called --  
(a playful flourish)  
-- tomato sauce. And a long time  
ago, in a land called "Italy --"

He reaches forward and takes Jonas's hand --

INT. ITALIAN PIAZZA -- MEMORY -- EVENING

-- and SUDDENLY they are both in AN ITALIAN PIAZZA. ARCHED COLUMNS with PILLARS MADE TO RESEMBLE RENAISSANCE SCULPTURES LOOK OUT UPON A HILLSIDE VILLAGE, AND IN THE DISTANCE WE CAN SEE THE BAY OF NAPLES, DOTTED WITH WHITE SAILS OF FISHING VESSELS. There is a large bowl of SPAGHETTI on a table with a CANDLE in an old chianti bottle and a CHECKED TABLECLOTH).

GIVER  
-- they ate this every day.

Now that the Giver is in a memory with Jonas, he's able to let go of his hand. He sits down and tucks a CHECKED NAPKIN into his collar. Jonas does the same. He doles a heap of spaghetti onto Jonas's plate and one onto his own. Jonas watches how the Giver twirls the spaghetti with his fork and scoops it into his mouth, the last noodle dangling from his lips. The Giver looks at Jonas and sucks the noodle in, making him laugh.

GIVER  
Try it.

Jonas tries it, revelling in slurping in the noodles.

JONAS  
It's -- sooo good.

GIVER  
And they had a wonderful drink called wine, and things made from dead leaves called cigarillos -- And after dinner they would lean back in their chairs and exult in the salty breezes from the bay.

Jonas is flatly amazed by all this sensory input.

JONAS  
It's, it's amazing. Why don't we  
have food like this?

GIVER  
Some people might not like it.  
(he tastes it)  
Mmm. Wait 'til you try chocolate.

JONAS  
But why don't we have the choice?

GIVER  
Because when people have choices,  
they often make mistakes.

Jonas licks his lips and, as he does, the spaghetti sauce  
turns a bright, saturated red, and stays that way.

JONAS  
It -- it's doing something.

GIVER  
What is.

JONAS  
The, the sauce. It's, changing.

GIVER  
Mmm. Yes. That's called "color."

JONAS  
It -- "color."

GIVER  
Color. This, for instance, is the  
color "red."

JONAS  
"Red."

Jonas looks around. The CHECKS on the TABLECLOTH and NAPKIN  
become RED TOO, as do the TILE ROOFS amid the tree-tops.

JONAS  
Wow. Red.

GIVER  
Like it?

JONAS  
It, it's amazing.

GIVER  
Try "Green."

He leans over and takes Jonas's hand. Now, the hillside COMES ALIVE with a hundred shades of lush green vegetation.

JONAS  
What --

GIVER  
And how about "Blue?"

He squeezes Jonas's hand, and now the sky and the bay BURST INTO DRAMATIC SHADES OF BLUE. Jonas gapes in wonderment.

JONAS  
But, I -- what is this? What am I seeing?

GIVER  
It's not what you can see, it's what others cannot.

He squeezes Jonas's hand again, and the hillside erupts in bursts of YELLOWS, ORANGES and VIOLETS as THOUSANDS OF FLOWERS BLOOM INTO VIEW.

JONAS  
Why can't everyone see color?

GIVER  
It's too powerful. Used to be, people saw color, some of them couldn't see anything else.

JONAS  
But it's so -- so beautiful --

GIVER  
And you will always have it. And now that you've had dinner, how about a show?

INT. MOVIE THEATER - MEMORY - NIGHT

A huge, ornate movie palace. Amid a packed crowd Jonas sits agape, watching a montage of great moments from classic Hollywood movies. Luke Skywalker, Maria von Trapp, John McClane, Dr. Dolittle, all caught in moments of intense action, spectacle and romance, anger and lust and tenderness, all manner of inappropriate behavior, all things utterly absent from Jonas's life.

Then, his attention is drawn to something in the row ahead of him. A TEENAGE COUPLE, out for a date. The BOY casually STRETCHES and puts his arm around the girl's shoulders. Jonas cranes his neck to see them better, and THE GIVER suddenly sits down next to him, proffering a box of popcorn.

GIVER  
And this...is popcorn.

Jonas takes some from the box and looks back at the screen.

JONAS  
What -- who are all these people?

GIVER  
This was a kind of entertainment.  
It was called "The Movies."

JONAS  
How could people watch all this --  
(searches)  
-- abnormal behavior? All this  
crashing and running, and, and --

Just then, onscreen, WOLVERINE hits a bad guy, who goes flying across the room.

JONAS  
What was that?! He just hit that  
guy! How could he do that?

GIVER  
That, they used to say, is  
entertainment.

And now, LEONARDO DICAPRIO, as Romeo, passionately kisses Claire Danes as Juliet. Jonas is startled enough by this, but then he looks over and sees that the TEEN COUPLE also PASSIONATELY KISS, as if in imitation of the onscreen lovers.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Jonas puts on his jacket, preparing to go home. The Giver watches him with a paternal air and a trace of nostalgia. Jonas looks up, sees the Giver watching him, and smiles.

JONAS  
What.

GIVER  
Oh, nothing. You remind me of  
someone from a long time ago.

JONAS  
The last Receiver-in-Training?

The Giver blanches, tries not to show it.

GIVER  
What do you know about the last  
Receiver-in-Training?

JONAS  
Nothing. My parents, they --

GIVER  
Don't worry about that. It was a  
long time ago.

He gives Jonas a supportive pat on the shoulder.

GIVER  
Good work today.

JONAS  
Thank you for giving me all that.

GIVER  
(smiles)  
All in a day's work.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

That night. Preparing to go to sleep, Jonas opens his medicine cabinet. There are at least six different bottles of pills inside. He opens one bottle and shakes a pill onto his palm. He's about to put it into his mouth, but he stops at the last moment and gives the pill a long, hard look. He throws the pill into the toilet. Then, after a moment, he upends the bottle and dumps his whole supply into the toilet. Then he flushes them down. As the toilet flushes, he gives himself a long, hard look in the mirror.

EXT. LANE - DAY

A piercingly blue sky. Lush, saturated green trees. From now, Jonas, and we, will see everything in their true colors.

Along a bike lane, near a bed of blazing red geraniums, Jonas has stopped with Fiona. They look at the flowers.

JONAS  
And you don't see...anything?

FIONA  
I see flowers.

JONAS  
Here. Take my hand.

Fiona gives him a look to see if he's kidding, then looks to see if anyone is watching, then takes his hand. Jonas squeezes it and closes his eyes in concentration.

JONAS  
See anything?

FIONA  
I see -- a very cute boy, acting very silly.

Jonas opens his eyes. Fiona gives him a sweet smile.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Jonas and Fiona walk their bikes up to the House of the Old. As they park them, Jonas looks at Fiona's fiery red hair.

FIONA  
I should go in.

JONAS  
I'll come with you.

FIONA  
It's authorized personnel only.

Jonas gives her a grin that says "oh yeah?"

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Jonas walks Fiona into the bright, airy reception area of the House of the Old; it has the overly cheerful feeling of a pediatric ward for terminally ill children. An ATTENDANT in her 30s fills out forms at the reception counter.

ATTENDANT  
Afternoon Fiona. Hello --

She sees Jonas and fumbles her pen.

ATTENDANT  
Receiver, I, I didn't know you were coming, I, I didn't, I'm sorry --

Fiona is startled by the Attendant's flustering.

JONAS  
It's all right, I --

ATTENDANT  
It, it's been so long since we had  
a Receiver come in here --

This remark sparks a look from Jonas.

JONAS  
When was the last Receiver here?

ATTENDANT  
Oh, I don't know, must've been ten  
years or more --

JONAS  
Ten years. Do you know what  
happened to her?

ATTENDANT  
I, uh -- you know, I'm not sure I  
remember; the mind plays tricks --  
I think she was released.

JONAS  
Released? \*

ATTENDANT  
Uh-huh, yeah I think so.

JONAS  
Y'know, I've always -- what happens  
when someone's released? \*

ATTENDANT  
Oh. Well. We're not supposed to -- \*

JONAS  
-- supposed to --

ATTENDANT  
But what am I -- you're the  
Receiver, you -- y'know, we're  
actually doing one today if you  
want to watch. \*

FIONA  
Yeah, releases are actually part of  
my training.

JONAS

Are they.

Fiona BEAMS; she's impressed with Jonas's authority and prestige. They share a secret SMILE.

INT. RELEASE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The RELEASE ROOM, a bright, warm, serene gathering place. Jonas and the ATTENDANT stand at the back. A RELEASE CEREMONY is underway. Low benches arranged in a semi-circle hold dozens of elderly people who lean back, relax and smile, holding tall fizzy drinks. The celebrant, ROBERTO, a tall, ruggedly handsome elderly man, sits in a special chair. Fiona stands nearby, observing. A CARETAKER emceeds the ceremony, which has the tenor of a testimonial dinner.

CARETAKER

...Instructor of Elevens, re-designed the grounds of the Central Plaza, all while raising two fine children. On the day of his Release, we all owe a debt of thanks to Roberto.

ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN

Thank you Roberto.

They raise their glasses in a toast. At the back of the room, Jonas whispers to the ATTENDANT.

JONAS

Is this it?

The Attendant shrugs and smiles.

EXT. COMMUNITY -- AFTERNOON

Another lovely day at the end of an afternoon. People go from their workplaces to their homes, kids go from school to their after-school jobs.

EXT. SCHOOL - SAME

Jonas, Fiona and Asher in front of their school. Jonas fairly bounces with excitement as they head to their bikes.

FIONA

-- and next week I'm going to start learning about medicines and stuff.

JONAS  
That's cool. What about you Asher,  
how's your training going?

ASHER  
It's weird -- turns out, having fun  
is hard work. What about you?

Jonas can only shrug and give a big grin.

ASHER  
Right. Can't talk about it.

JONAS  
Sorry. Gotta go, can't be late.

He hops on his bike and pedals off at full speed.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANES - DAY

Jonas cycles through the community, blissful and excited. He can't wait to get to training. His MIND SWIMS WITH MEMORIES THAT HE'S RECEIVED, which we see in RAPID SNIPPETS:

FIRST, Jonas RIDES A ROLLERCOASTER, in the first seat, zooming up, down and through loops, as the GIVER sits next to him, watching his first coaster ride with fatherly pride.

THEN, he pogos amid a lunging, sweaty teenage crowd at a ROCK CONCERT. The band surges, as does the crowd's hormones. A DANCING TEENAGE GIRL in a TORN T-SHIRT MAKES EYES AT JONAS as he SMILES BACK AT HER as the Giver stands in the corner, nodding and smiling knowingly --

THEN, he and the Giver sit on the side of a MOUNTAIN, outside a tent, and watch the SUN rise over a misty valley --

THEN Jonas RUNS A RACE in the OLYMPICS. Every muscle strained and taut, his expression both agonized and joyful as the CHEERS OF THOUSANDS RING IN HIS EARS and FLASHBULBS BURST as he LEADS a pack of runners down a track to the finish line, as the Giver stands on the sidelines, CHEERING --

THEN, Jonas and the Giver are among a clutch of people huddled in the doorway of a FLORIST on the Left Bank of the Seine, caught in a sudden thunderstorm. The people are drenched and cheerful and the light over the river is strange and beautiful. He and the Giver exchange looks of profound commonality; they've gone so many places, done so many things together, and they can't tell anyone else about any of it.

BACK IN THE PRESENT, Jonas cycles swiftly through the community, pedestrians stepping out of the way and staring as he zooms past. He screeches to a halt beside the GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, his back tire spitting gravel. He looks around his surroundings, looks at the gray, ordinary lives passing him by all around, grins and shakes his head sadly. He's got the best job in the world. He dismounts and rings the buzzer outside the Giver's door.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Jonas comes in, ready for training. The Giver is DOUBLED UP ON THE FLOOR, WEEPING, GASPING IN PAIN.

JONAS

Giver!

GIVER

Jonas -- please --

He reaches a quivering hand toward Jonas. Jonas takes it.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET, 20TH CENTURY - DAY

On a grimy, gritty, cluttered Manhattan curb, JONAS huddles, filthy, haggard, rail-thin and dressed in rags. A cardboard sign at his feet reads "PLEASE HELP." A coffee cup at his feet holds a handful of change. A weebegone DOG lies curled up beside him. Few look at him; those that do, do so with contempt. Jonas clutches his belly as his stomach GROWLS. He COUGHS into his hand, then sees that his hand is SPATTERED WITH BLOOD. He has TUBERCULOSIS.

He COUGHS AGAIN. He CANNOT STOP. He begins to have a SEIZURE. He CRUMPLES TO THE GROUND, trembling, coughing uncontrollably. His EYES ROLL BACK as he WHEEZES, UNABLE TO BREATHE. His limbs SPASM UNCONTROLLABLY.

INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The Receiver lets go of Jonas's hands and he FLIES BACKWARD, falling to the floor, gasping for breath, racked with pain. The Giver goes to him and offers him a hand up.

GIVER

I'm sorry I had to give you that.  
Sometimes the pain is too great.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Atop of the House of the Old there is a place for the Receiver to sit and look out over the community. He and Jonas sit there now, Jonas shivering with weakness and terror. The Giver wraps a wing of his robe around him.

GIVER

That was a memory of Hunger and Illness. That kind of thing used to happen all the time, all over the world. And I'm the only one who knows. So when a committee says "Why can't couples have more than two children?" I say, because it will lead to Hunger and Illness. You have to know these things so that other people don't.

JONAS

I can see why memories have to be restricted. But why only one Receiver? If we gave, like, one painful memory to each person in community, just one wouldn't be too much for anybody, and you wouldn't need a Receiver to feel them all.

GIVER

But that's not the rule.

JONAS

But you're the Receiver, you could make a new rule.

GIVER

That's not my decision to make, or yours. Just because you see things differently doesn't give you the right to change everything.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas, Lily, Mom and Dad at dinner. Gabe fusses in his bassinet. Lily plays with her elephant and Gabe's hippo, making them have a conversation.

LILY

(as elephant) Your teeth should be bigger!

(MORE)

LILY (cont'd)  
 (as hippo) Your nose should be shorter! (elephant) You should be more the same! (hippo) No you!

She makes them fight.

JONAS  
 You know, a long time ago there used to really be animals?

LILY  
 What?

JONAS  
 Sure, elephants, hippos, dogs, they were everywhere.

LILY  
 Yeah, right.

She picks at her food. She's not hungry.

JONAS  
 Eat your food.

LILY  
 What?

JONAS  
 Eat your food. You're lucky you have it. You don't know how lucky.

LILY  
 (a little spooked)  
 Mo-om?

MOM  
 Jonas?

JONAS  
 She should eat her food!

He suddenly BANGS HIS FIST on the table in frustration. Everyone at the table JUMPS in shock, and Gabe CRIES.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Jonas comes into the reception area, ready for training. The RECEPTIONIST is not at her desk. A little sign says "Back in 5 min." Jonas takes out a KEY from his pocket, unlocks the door and goes inside.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Jonas walks in the door.

JONAS

Giver, I --

He stops and looks around. The room is empty.

JONAS

Giver?

Jonas peeks into a couple of corners, making sure that the Giver is not there. Then, he goes to the Giver's desk and picks up his REMOTE. He points it at the huge glass screen and presses a button. Nothing happens. He presses a few more buttons. Nothing happens. Then, finally, the video screen BURSTS ON, showing the HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT SURVEILLANCE IMAGES from around the community. Jonas goes to the screen, gazing at all the people. He finds Fiona in the House of the Old, bathing an elderly man. He finds Asher, walking up a pathway. Then he finds THE GIVER, in an office with the CHIEF ELDER, talking.

He aims the remote at the screen and presses a button. The image BLOWS UP to MOST OF THE VIDEO SCREEN with a handful of other images in the margins. The image blow-up comes with a BURST OF VOLUME. Jonas JUMPS as VOICES fill the room.

CHIEF ELDER (ON VIDEO)

-- repeat of the previous fiasco?  
Jonas CANNOT FIND OUT about that.  
He's asking questions, snooping  
around the House of the Old, he  
even got in to see a release --

Jonas, panicked, frantically presses buttons on the remote, trying to turn down the volume.

GIVER (ON VIDEO)

I can handle him. He will do what  
we need him to do. I have never  
failed this community.

CHIEF ELDER (ON VIDEO)

And what was Rosemary?

Jonas finally succeeds in MUTING the video and tosses down the remote. His hand trembles, he can't breathe. He knows he's just heard something he's not supposed to.

He slowly backs away from the screen, back back back, until he bumps into the Giver's desk. He turns and SCREAMS when he sees, sitting at the desk, A 12-YEAR-OLD BLOND-HAIRED GIRL, bent studiously over a drawing.

He stands petrified. The girl does not look up from her work. Jonas looks closer and sees that she is actually another HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION, one he must have turned on while fumbling with the remote.

Suddenly the blond girl LOOKS UP and SMILES, as if someone has just called her name; she has an unearthly, ethereal beauty and brilliant blue eyes. She carries on half a conversation with an unseen, unheard friend.

HOLOGRAM GIRL

Hey Beanstalk.

(then, mock embarrassment)

Do I? Gosh...

On the video screen, we see the Giver LEAVE the Chief Elder's office. Jonas is too entranced by the hologram to see this. Then, in a moment, on ANOTHER screen, we see him LEAVING the Chief Elder's BUILDING. Meanwhile, the hologram goes on.

HOLOGRAM GIRL

Drawing.

(beat)

A horse.

(beat; mock exasperated)

Oh, if you must...

She holds up the drawing, a finely rendered horse running through a field of wild grass. Beat.

On the video screen, we see the Giver WALKING UP A PATHWAY.

HOLOGRAM GIRL

Thank you.

On the video screen, we see the Giver WALKING OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF THE OLD, ROUNDING THE CORNER TO HIS LIVING QUARTERS.

HOLOGRAM GIRL

Mm...I'd ride away. All the way to Elsewhere.

(beat; coquettish)

Mmmaybeee...

Big laugh, as she pulls her long blond hair back in a ponytail. Then, a longish beat as she listens carefully.

On the video screen, we see the Giver ENTER INTO HIS LIVING QUARTERS, then, on another screen, we see him STOP TO LOOK FOR HIS KEYS. Jonas sees none of this. \*

HOLOGRAM GIRL

Sure. I know. You told me that.

(beat)

No, I know. But that's okay,  
'cause you know why?

(beat)

'Cause I figure, no matter what --

There is a noise at the door. Jonas looks up and sees the Giver INSERT HIS KEY IN THE DOOR. Jonas presses a button on the remote to shut off the hologram.

HOLOGRAM GIRL

-- I'll always have the memory of -- \*

Jonas DIVES onto the couch and pretends to be dozing.

GIVER

Hi. Sorry I'm late.

JONAS

(feigning sleepiness)

Oh, are you late?

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - DAY

Jonas walks home from the Giver's living quarters. He looks up at one point and sees a SECURITY CAMERA, attached to a lamp post. He stops and looks at it, then looks at the HOUSE OF THE OLD. There, too, is a security camera, looking down on the milling populace.

He rounds the corner of the House of the Old and sees another security camera. The two cameras, scanning back and forth, cover a wide swath of open quad, leading out to the new bridge. But there seems to be a BLIND SPOT, between the two cameras, which is not covered. Jonas looks at the camera and slowly WALKS BACKWARDS, toward the bridge, trying to gauge when he comes into each camera's range. Then, suddenly, a pair of tall, black-suited SECURITY OFFICERS appear behind him.

SECURITY OFFICER

Problem, Receiver?

Jonas JUMPS out of his skin at the sudden intrusion.

JONAS

Um, no, um, just, um -- thanks.

He dashes off, head down; the security officers watch him go.

INT. MOM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dad tries to feed fussy Gabe a bottle, to get him to sleep. Jonas appears in the doorway.

JONAS

What's wrong with him?

DAD

I can't figure it out, he --

His speech is drowned out by a fresh squall from Gabe.

JONAS

Can I help?

DAD

Well, I can't see how --

JONAS

Can I try something?

He takes Gabe's hand, closes his eyes and concentrates.

EXT. LAKE - DAY - MEMORY

On a placid lake, aboard a small but elegant sailboat, under a sultry blue sky, Jonas holds the crying Gabe in his arms. The strong yellow sun bakes their skins golden, the light flickers on the waves like a carpet of stars, the water gently slaps the hull of the boat, and the gentle rolling motion feels like the arms of a loving mother. Gabe's cries grow softer and softer and finally cease. Jonas opens his eyes and looks into Gabe's. Their eyes are both a piercing crystal blue. Gabe gives a cheerful gurgling sound and then falls promptly asleep. Jonas looks at his sleeping face and smiles, feeling a deep contentment.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Back in the living room, Gabe now sleeps like the proverbial baby, cradled in Dad's arms. Jonas takes his hand away. Dad is incredulous and a little spooked.

DAD  
How did you do that?

JONAS  
(shrugs)  
He likes me I guess.  
(then)  
Hey Dad?

DAD  
Yeah, sport?

JONAS  
Do you like your job?

DAD  
Like my job? My job is great.

JONAS  
Do you like this community?

DAD  
Sure. Great community. The best.

JONAS  
Do you like this house?

DAD  
You bet.

JONAS  
Why are there so many security  
cameras everywhere?

DAD  
Are there? I never noticed.

JONAS  
Who do you think watches them all?

DAD  
Dunno, never thought about it.

JONAS  
What happened to Rosemary?

DAD  
(imperceptible beat)  
Who?

JONAS  
Rosemary. What happened to her?

DAD  
I don't know who that is, big guy.

JONAS  
Mm. Okay.  
(then)  
Do you lie?

DAD  
(blanching)  
W-what?

JONAS  
Do you lie? Do you tell lies?

DAD  
No. Of course not. No.

JONAS  
Mm.  
(then)  
Maybe Gabe should sleep in my room.

DAD  
Would you mind that?

JONAS  
Huh-uh. It'd be great.

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gabe sleeps soundly in a crib beside Jonas's bed. Jonas lies awake, watching over him.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Jonas walks through the community to the Giver's house.

As he approaches the door to the Giver's house, he sees the CHIEF ELDER talking to his DAD. He stops and looks. The Chief Elder looks up and sees him; then, so does Dad. Neither acknowledge Jonas. Instead, the Chief Elder puts a hand on Dad's shoulder and leads him away.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Jonas comes into the Giver's living quarters.

JONAS  
Giver, I just saw --

The Giver stands in the middle of the room, arms folded, expression deeply troubled. What does he know?

JONAS  
What happened?

GIVER  
Today is very important.

JONAS  
Wh-why? What's going to happen?

The Giver MOTIONS for Jonas to come toward him. He does. As he nears, the Giver reaches under a ledge and pushes a button. With a thud and a rumbling, a section of the floor DESCENDS INTO THE GROUND. Jonas is astonished as the floor sinks, lower and lower, past rough concrete walls. The light dims as they descend. Jonas can feel his throat closing, his breath getting tighter as the air around him gets cooler.

GIVER  
You have to understand is that no  
one has ever seen what you now see.

With a shuddering groan, the floor now comes to a rest in almost total darkness.

JONAS  
W-where are we?

\*

The Giver hits the lights, and we find we are in --

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

-- a large concrete vault. Jonas gasps as he looks around and sees HUNDREDS OF ARTIFACTS, dazzling examples of humanity's past efforts in many different disciplines. Here is a white 1961 Ford Thunderbird, there is an Eames chair, over there is a Land camera, here is a Gameboy, there is a miniature wind-up pick-up truck. Jonas picks up the truck and runs his hand over its surface, admiring its lines. He then sees a MR. MICROPHONE and its tinny little amp. He picks up the microphone.

\*

\*

\*

JONAS  
What's this?

He is startled when his voice comes out of the amplifier. He puts down the microphone as if it had the plague.

He reaches over and picks up an egg of Silly Putty. He opens it and squishes it in his fingers.

GIVER

This, this is what humanity is capable of. This is the best. Centuries of effort.

He runs his fingers along the edge of a bottle of Coke.

GIVER

I come here when things get me down. I feel like the people who made these things wanted me to enjoy life, wanted everyone to.

Jonas stretches the Silly Putty, then wads it up again. The Giver takes it from him, then squishes it against a NEWSPAPER whose HEADLINE reads "SPACE SHUTTLE EXPLODES." The Giver lifts the Silly Putty off the paper, and the photo of the exploding shuttle comes off with it.

GIVER

And this is just the beginning.

He extends his hand. Jonas takes it.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

Jonas and The Giver walk through the halls of the Getty Center, surrounded by stunning artworks, from all eras and schools, from cave paintings to Michelangelo, from Van Gogh to Warhol. Jonas gapes in astonishment.

GIVER

One day you'll have all this, to keep you company, to remind you what people can do when they're inspired by their better nature.

JONAS

It's all so incredible. Why can't we share this with the community?

The Giver puts a kindly, paternal hand on Jonas's shoulder.

GIVER

That's what I have to give you today. The reason why. I wanted to show you the best, so that you would come back after I show you the worst.

He reaches over and takes Jonas's hand.

## EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

On a field in Europe, JONAS is a French soldier charging across a blasted no-man's land as part of an infantry charge, sometime in World War I. He carries a rifle with bayonet. A staggered line of men charge on either side of him. Mortar blasts explode, throwing a half-dozen men in the air each time. From the forest ahead, angry volleys of gunfire spit. Jonas is confused and terrified as he looks around, seeing men cut down by the dozens by the suppressing fire. The man directly in front of him is shot in the leg and goes down, and then the same happens to the man on his left. Jonas tries running in a zig-zag pattern, but it is no good. The inevitable occurs, and Jonas pitches forward into a crater. He writhes in the dirt, frantically searching himself for his wound. He opens his tunic and finds that his chest is covered with blood. He SCREAMS.

## INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Some time later, upstairs in the Giver's Living Quarters, Jonas sits on the floor, blank-eyed and staring trembling in horror. The Giver sits on the sofa, head hung down, hair hanging in tangles. He has clearly received no joy from passing on this memory.

JONAS

So. That's war.

GIVER

That's one memory from one moment from one war. I could give you ten million memories from a thousand different wars, and it still wouldn't show you what war is.

(then)

That's why people had to forget. So none of that ever happens again.

JONAS

And no one -- no one -- knows this.

GIVER

Out there, you mean?  
(shakes his head)  
They know nothing.

JONAS

It's too much for one person to bear. Don't you see that?

GIVER  
This is the way it has to be done.

JONAS  
What happened to Rosemary? \*

GIVER  
(recoiling)  
How do you know that name?

JONAS  
What happened to her?

GIVER  
She has nothing to do with this. \*

JONAS  
Tell me.

GIVER  
You are a child, Jonas. You are a  
bright child, but you are a child.

Jonas bolts up and strides out the door. \*

GIVER  
Jonas! Wait!

But he's too exhausted to go after him. \*

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - DAY \*

Jonas strides stiff-legged through the community, hands thrust in his pockets, deeply troubled. All around him, everyday citizens go about their business, happy, oblivious. Two grownups chat blithely on a corner, but when they see Jonas coming with his stormy visage, they stop their talking and abruptly move away from him. Jonas sighs and mutters as he shoves past them. \*

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Jonas walks along a path next to a public park, consumed by his dark thoughts. A familiar sound intrudes upon the storm in his head: it is the sound of children playing. He looks up. Asher is supervising a group of other kids, girls and boys, who are playing a war game, the same game we saw Fiona and Asher playing at the beginning of the movie. \*

Children run and chase across a scrimmage field, hold sticks like rifles and bayonets, fire imaginary bullets at each other, die imaginary deaths, bicker over the nuance of the rules of the game. Jonas watches in horror. \*

ASHER (O.S.)  
Bam! Gotcha!

Jonas whips around; Asher points an imaginary rifle at him.

ASHER  
Bam! Gotcha again! Bam!

Jonas just stares at him until Asher stops shooting.

Jonas walks slowly into the field of battle, glowering at all the other children. One or two shoot at him, but one baleful glance from Jonas stops them cold. Slowly, all the kids stop playing and look at Jonas, wondering what's going on. One little kid, no more than six, charges up to Jonas from behind, his imaginary bayonet over his head.

LITTLE KID  
Arrrrrrggghhh!

Jonas whips around and violently wrenches the stick out of the little kid's hand. He breaks it over his knee and throws it to the ground. Everyone gasps. The little kid looks at Jonas with a stunned expression, then slowly begins to keen, tears coursing down his cheeks. His big brother comes to his aide and takes him off the field. Everyone looks at Jonas, startled and confused. Jonas glares at them, then turns and walks away from the field. Asher follows him.

ASHER  
What was that for?

JONAS  
You shouldn't play that game.

ASHER  
What, are you Director of Recreation now?

JONAS  
You don't know what that game is.

ASHER  
Sure I do, it's a great game and you just ruined it.

Jonas just looks at him, seething. He can't tell Asher why the game is bad; all he can do leave the scene.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The next day. At the head of the class, the interactive blackboard reads "HISTORY." Jonas sits at the back of the room, slouching down low at his desk, his arms folded, his right foot tapping impatiently against the front leg of his desk. Fiona sits next to him, looking worried. The HISTORY INSTRUCTOR, a pleasant middle-aged man with a mellifluous voice, walks through the rows of students like a shepherd tending a flock.

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

One of the most important events of our history came quite recently with the new bridge across the river, designed by a young engineer-in-training named Benjamin, who --

Jonas sets his jaw and raises his hand.

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

Yes, Jonas? You have a question?

JONAS

Where does the new bridge lead to?

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

Good question. It goes to other communities and allows trucks to bring in food and material goods.

JONAS

How many communities are there?

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

I - I'm not sure I understand.

The other students look at each other. ASHER seems particularly interested in Jonas's line of questions. FIONA seems more disturbed than interested.

JONAS

How many people are there?

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

I don't have specific numbers but --

JONAS

Who built the community?

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

I -- I'm sorry?

JONAS

What was here before the community?

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

"Before the community?"

JONAS

Yes. This is a history class, what was here before the community?

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

There is no recorded history "before the community."

JONAS

Of course there is. There's a real history. The story of who we are and where we came from, a story we can look at and learn from so we can know what we should do next.

(then, to the students)

Why don't we know about that?

Isn't anyone curious? You think

all of this just appeared one day?

\*  
\*  
\*  
  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

He looks around the room. His classmates' faces are confused, apoplectic. There's an electric pause, as everyone tries to guess what will happen next. The Instructor gives Jonas a snide, sideways grin.

\*

INSTRUCTOR

Seems we have a joker in the class.

Relieved, everyone in class begins to laugh, but Jonas stops them cold by turning defiantly to the Instructor.

JONAS

What happened to Rosemary?

The Instructor reels as if slapped. All the laughter stops. FIONA hurriedly SCRIBBLES A NOTE on a scrap of paper.

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

Wh-what --

JONAS

I'm the Receiver. You have to answer me. What happened to her?

HISTORY INSTRUCTOR

(setting his jaw)

No one knows what happened to Rosemary.

(MORE)

## HISTORY INSTRUCTOR (cont'd)

Now, if you are quite done, the rules state that an instructor shall allow no individual to disrupt the learning process. To that end I ask for your apology, and for you to remove yourself from this class.

He folds his arms in defiance. Jonas looks around; all the kids are looking at him with defiance as well. He looks down at his desk to pick up his books. OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYE, he sees FIONA'S HAND, NUDGING THE SCRAP OF PAPER TOWARD HIM. Jonas pretends he does not see. He gathers his books, puts them into his knapsack, and gives the room one last GLARE. Everyone in the room is STARING at him.

He feints leaving the room, then turns abruptly.

JONAS

Boo!

Everyone in the room JUMPS. When they do, Jonas SNATCHES THE NOTE from Fiona's hand and walks out of the room.

EXT. SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Jonas walks out of the school building, fuming. He looks around. No one is watching. He UNFOLDS the scrap of paper. It says "HOUSE OF THE OLD. 4:00pm."

Jonas puzzles over the note, then LOOKS UP. There, on the corner of the building, POINTING RIGHT AT THE ENTRANCE, is a SECURITY CAMERA. Jonas quickly looks away and WALKS OFF.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - DAY

Jonas strides down a lane, now deeply paranoid. He keeps his eyes ahead of him, but every time he looks up, he sees another SECURITY CAMERA, mounted to a lamp post, tree or building, TRACKING HIM AS HE MOVES ALONG.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Fiona waits outside the House of the Old. An ATTENDANT walks by, on her way in.

ATTENDANT

Afternoon. Ready for work?

FIONA

Y-yeah. Almost. I'll be in.

The Attendant goes in. Fiona looks around, wide-eyed. JONAS appears, from behind a hedge, close to the building.

JONAS

Fiona.

Fiona turns, startled. Jonas motions her over to him. As she comes over, he looks up. The SECURITY CAMERA at the entrance is pointed in ANOTHER DIRECTION. Jonas grabs Fiona by the arm and takes her around the side of the building.

FIONA

Jonas, what --

Jonas motions for her to be quiet. They ROUND THE CORNER of the House of the Old, hugging the side, behind the row of cypress trees, and come to the CORNER of the building, the place where the TWO CAMERAS HAVE THEIR BLIND SPOT.

JONAS

He can't see us here.

FIONA

Who?

JONAS

Never mind. What do you know?

FIONA

Jonas, what --

JONAS

There isn't time, what do you know?

FIONA

Well, you were saying, in school, about -- about Rosemary --

JONAS

Yes, Rosemary. What --

FIONA

Well, there's a woman, in the House of the Old, Larissa, she's, you know, losing her mind a little --

JONAS

Sure. And?

FIONA

She calls me Rosemary.

JONAS  
You're kidding.

FIONA  
No. And she, she tells me things,  
things I don't understand.

JONAS  
Can I go talk to her?

FIONA  
We can both talk to her.

Suddenly, we hear the GIVER's voice, just offscreen.

GIVER  
Jonas?

Jonas and Fiona TURN to see the Giver standing just a few feet away, looking sternly at them.

GIVER  
It's time for training. You can  
play with your friends later.

JONAS  
Y-yes sir.  
(then, to Fiona)  
See you later?

FIONA  
Yeah. Later.

They give each other a look freighted with significance, and Jonas heads toward the Giver. The Giver scrutinizes Fiona and then puts a friendly arm around Jonas's shoulder and leads him toward his Living Quarters. He gives a sunny wave to a passing Elder as he leans in close to Jonas. His tone is anything but friendly.

GIVER  
We need to talk.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Moments later, the Giver leads Jonas into his Living Quarters. He goes over to his desk and gestures for Jonas to sit. Jonas, trembling with anxiety, does so.

JONAS  
Wh-what's up?

The Giver gives Jonas a long hard look.

GIVER  
Why don't you tell me, Jonas.

JONAS  
I, what, nothing, I --

GIVER  
No lies here, Jonas. What we do here, in this room, is the most sacred, most important work in the community. Out there, everyone thinks that the new bridge is important, or the new clothing line. But this, here, us, that's what's really important.

JONAS  
I -- I know that.

GIVER  
When you stage little stunts like you did today in school, word gets back to the Chief Elder, she puts pressure on me.

JONAS  
But what does that --

GIVER  
You could be the greatest Receiver we've ever had. Your capacity for memory is incredible, you've learned more in a few months than --

He stops himself; he can't finish the thought, so Jonas does.

JONAS  
Than Rosemary.

GIVER  
(beat, then)  
Yes.

JONAS  
I asked my father about her --

GIVER  
Your father doesn't know what happened to Rosemary. The Chief Elder and I are the only ones who know what happened to her.

JONAS

What did happen?

GIVER

Sometimes, you have to give up the thing you care about most to serve the greater good.

JONAS

What does that mean?

The Giver thinks, then sits forward and puts out his hands.

GIVER

Give me your hands.

JONAS

What are you going to give me?

GIVER

This is not the answer to your question. But it will help you prepare for it.

Jonas hesitantly takes the Giver's hands.

WE SEE FOUR MEMORIES IN RAPID SUCCESSION:

FIRST, Jonas is THE BIRTHDAY BOY, the center of attention, in the dining room of a suburban house. Parents and brothers and sisters and friends sing "Happy Birthday" to him as his mother carries in a CAKE covered with candles. Jonas BEAMS as he luxuriates in the fond attention.

THEN, somewhere in a city park, Jonas leans up against a TREE, with a cute 14-year-old GIRL. They stare at each other, Jonas strokes her cheek, the time is ripe, and Jonas, trembling with anticipation, leans in for his FIRST KISS.

THEN, Jonas stands at the ALTAR OF A CHURCH, dressed in a tuxedo, amid a WEDDING PARTY, looking down the aisle to see HIS BRIDE approach, smiling and demure, both sides of the church smiling through their tears.

THEN, Jonas is a MARRIED MAN in a hospital room, holding his newborn son in his hands, his wife tired but still beaming in the bed beside him.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

The Giver lets go of Jonas's hands. Jonas almost looks drugged with soft wonder.

JONAS

The boy. He was special. It was a special day.

GIVER

It was his birthday. Each person used to have their own birthday, and their family would celebrate.

JONAS

And the girl, in the park?

GIVER

First kiss.

JONAS

And the woman in white?

GIVER

That's how people used to get a spouse. They chose one another.

\*

JONAS

People birthed their own children?

GIVER

And the cycle would begin again.

JONAS

All those memories, there was a, a feeling that ran through them.

GIVER

That's right. And I saved the best for last.

He takes Jonas's hands again.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - MORNING - MEMORY

Jonas wakes in the bedroom of a 19th-century country house. He rubs the sleep from his eyes and looks around the room. In the semi-darkness, he can see, scattered about, the clothes, toys and decor of a mid-20th-century 12-year-old boy: a train set, a rocket ship, plastic dinosaurs. He looks out the window. In the pre-dawn light, he can see a thick blanket of snow covering a piney woods. He hears a mysterious sound coming from downstairs, which we recognize as a CHRISTMAS CAROL. He gets out of bed. He has on flannel pajamas with a cowboy motif. A pair of soft leather slippers wait by the foot of the bed for him to slip into. He opens the bedroom door and we FOLLOW HIM out into the hall.

His slippers make tiny whisking sounds on the worn carpet runner. The light in the hall is a cool blue but a warm amber comes from DOWNSTAIRS. The singing grows louder as we follow him DOWN A CENTER-HALL STAIRCASE past framed photos of long-gone family members. He comes around a corner into A LARGE LIVING ROOM, where he finds a LARGE FAMILY putting the finishing touches on a tall, gorgeous CHRISTMAS TREE. There is a mother and father, two older brothers and an older sister, plus a GRANDFATHER and GRANDMOTHER. Judging from their clothes, it seems to be around 1966. An Irish setter pants happily on the couch and a ginger cat reclines by the robust fire in the fireplace. Candles flicker on the end-tables and mantle, decorated with dozens of Christmas cards. Jonas stands in the doorway and smiles in wonder.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

The Giver and Jonas lean against the railing of the new bridge that spans the man-made river, demarcating the edge of the community. From this vantage point we see, on one side of the bridge, the lively community, and on the other side, fields of crops. Jonas's face is streaked with tears, but he doesn't seem sad. Instead, he seems ineffably happy.

JONAS

That was beautiful, but I still don't understand.

GIVER

You will.

JONAS

(nods, then)

It's funny, it didn't seem like a very practical way to live? I mean, they had fire, right there in the room with them, and that's dangerous. But I liked the light they gave off. And the warmth.

GIVER

Mm.

JONAS

And they had old people living right in the house. What was that?

GIVER

Those were called "grandparents." They were the parents of parents.

JONAS

The parents of parents.

GIVER  
That's right.

JONAS  
Huh. Well, I can see how our way  
is better, because you couldn't  
care for the old the way we do.  
But that family felt more, more --

GIVER  
Complete?

JONAS  
And that feeling was there again.  
It was incredible. So strong, so --

The Giver suddenly gives Jonas a big HUG. Jonas is taken  
aback, then looks up at the Giver.

JONAS  
A little like that. Yes.

GIVER  
People called it "love."

JONAS  
"Love."

GIVER  
Made the world go 'round.

Jonas looks into the Giver's eyes.

JONAS  
"Love."

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonas's Mom sits in a comfy chair, reading a legal brief  
while Dad feeds the almost-toddler Gabe with a bottle. Jonas  
walks in, dressed for bed.

JONAS  
G'night, mom. Night, dad.

MOM  
Good night, Jonas.

DAD  
Night, son.

Jonas almost walks out, but then stops.

JONAS  
Mom? Dad? I have a question.

DAD  
What is it, son?

Jonas looks from one parent to the other. Beat.

JONAS  
Do you -- do you love me?

There's a sickening pause, then both Mom and Dad burst into surprised laughter.

DAD  
Jonas! You of all people!  
Precision of language, please!

Jonas tries to laugh along, but doesn't see the joke.

MOM  
What your dad means is that - that -  
word - is very general, and very,  
mm, archaic, obsolete, meaningless.

DAD  
And you've always done so well on  
vocabulary.

MOM  
If you asked "Do you enjoy me?"  
The answer is certainly "yes."

DAD  
Or "Do we take pride in you?"  
Wholeheartedly yes.

MOM  
But, "love," do you see? It's the  
wrong word. You see?

Jonas gives a wan smile, as if to say he understands.

JONAS  
Yeah, thanks, that's all clear now.  
(then, to Dad)  
Should I put Gabe to bed?

DAD  
Sure. Thanks.

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonas sits on the end of his bed, holding Gabe in his arms. He looks at the face of the peacefully sleeping infant.

JONAS

Things could be different, Gabe.  
There could be colors. And  
grandparents. And everyone could  
have memories.

He gets up and puts Gabe into his crib. He smooths down an unruly lock of hair atop the baby's head. Gabe sighs softly in his sleep at the touch of Jonas's finger.

JONAS

Gabe? There could be love.

INT. HALLWAY, HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Jonas and Fiona crouch in an alcove. Jonas peeks out. When the SECURITY CAMERA has turned away from them, he grabs Fiona's hand and dashes across the hall with her. They turn away from the hall as an ORDERLY walks by.

They duck into another alcove. There is a supply cart parked nearby, with mops and brooms and linen. Jonas GRABS the cart and pulls it into the alcove. He takes a sheet and strings it up between two mops, creating a wall of cloth on the cart. He checks to see that no one is coming, then --

JONAS

Okay, keep your face down.

Slouching low, he pushes the cart into the corridor and past another security camera. All the camera can see is a cart with a sheet strung up on one side, with two heads of hair, indistinguishable from any other two heads. They ease the cart into the entranceway to the BATHING ROOM, then they each pick up an armload of TOWELS from the cart.

FIONA

I've never done anything like this.

JONAS

You don't have to do anything, just  
take me to Larissa. Wait.

He looks up and down the hall, then gives Fiona a LONG, SENSUAL KISS. Fiona is startled, but does not protest.

FIONA

Oh. Oh my.

JONAS

One day, everyone will do that.

FIONA

Really?

JONAS

I promise.

They go inside the BATHING ROOM.

INT. BATHING ROOM, HOUSE OF THE OLD - CONTINUOUS

Fiona leads Jonas in. Jonas stays her in the doorway and takes a careful look around the room. There are no cameras apparent. He nods to Fiona, and she takes him over to LARISSA, a handsome woman in her 70s, who leans back in a tub, eyes closed in extreme relaxation.

LARISSA

Is that you, Rosemary?

She opens her eyes. They are milky white.

FIONA

I brought along a friend.

JONAS

Hi, Larissa. I'm Jonas.

LARISSA

Jonas, that's a nice name. Do you like Rosemary's hair?

JONAS

(looking at Fiona)

I like it a lot. One day, I hope she can see how beautiful it is.

Fiona SMILES.

LARISSA

I don't like it. It used to be so nice. Real light. Real unusual.

JONAS

R-Rosemary had light hair?

The girl in the hologram, Jonas remembers, had blond hair.

LARISSA

Shone like nothing I've ever seen.  
Good to have her back, though.

(to Fiona)

You naughty girl! When you went  
away, things sure got screwed up  
around here, pardon my language.

JONAS

(to Fiona)

You naughty girl.  
(then, to Larissa)  
What happened?

LARISSA

Oo, got strange pictures in my  
head, everybody did, strangest  
things, weird creatures, people,  
odd kinds of events, couldn't even  
begin to describe 'em to you.

JONAS

Memories?

LARISSA

Y'know, they felt like memories,  
but they felt like, like someone  
else's memories. That make sense?

JONAS

Sure, I understand.

LARISSA

The Receiver, the old one, he said  
it was on account of Rosemary goin'  
away, when she left she kinda left  
these sort of pictures behind, and  
we kinda picked 'em up. It was  
okay though, a few more pills and  
people forgot again, yes, yes.

(then, to Fiona)

Don't go away again, sweetie.

Across the room, we see, through a window, attached to a lamp  
post outside, a SECURITY CAMERA, aimed STRAIGHT AT THEM.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

Jonas and Fiona huddle outside the delivery entrance to the  
House of the Old.

FIONA  
What was she talking about?

JONAS  
Something happened. Something bad.

FIONA  
It was only ten years ago. I could  
ask my parents about it --

JONAS  
No, don't talk to anybody about  
this.

FIONA  
Okay.

JONAS  
I'm serious. You can't. Promise.

FIONA  
Okay, I promise.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- MORNING

Dad tends to Gabe as Mom gathers papers for work, and Lily  
dawdles at the breakfast table.

MOM  
Finish your breakfast, Lily.  
(then, to Dad)  
Busy day today?

DAD  
Yeah, set of twins. Identical.

LILY  
(sing-song)  
One for here, one for Elsewhere --

Jonas comes in from his bedroom.

JONAS  
Do you take it Elsewhere yourself?

DAD  
Usually the heavier one stays here.  
The other one, I do a little  
release ceremony, then "bye-bye."

JONAS  
And someone takes it Elsewhere?

DAD

That's the way it works.

LILY

Wouldn't it be weird if they gave both twins the same name, and there would be two people in different communities who looked the same, and had the same names, and if they both got lost and ended up in each other's communities, their parents wouldn't know which was which --

MOM

Okay Lily, time for school.

Lily sighs; no one takes her seriously around here.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - DAY

Jonas bikes toward the school. Asher pulls up next to him. He is greatly upset.

ASHER

Jonas!

JONAS

Oh, are you talking to me now?  
Aren't you afraid I might bite?

ASHER

Forget about that, what's going on?

Jonas registers Asher's agitation. What is going on?

JONAS

What. What happened?

ASHER

Fiona's family got transferred to another community! They moved in the middle of the night!

Jonas slams on the brakes. Asher almost falls over.

JONAS

Where did you hear this?

ASHER

I didn't here it anywhere, I rode by her house, they're not there!

## EXT. FIONA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jonas and Asher ride up to Fiona's house. A pair of WORK TRUCKS are parked outside. Jonas and Asher get off their bikes and go up to the front. The house is beyond empty; even the DOORS AND WINDOWS HAVE BEEN REMOVED. This family hasn't just moved, they have been removed, and all traces of them too. A crew of WORKMEN repaint the bare walls and remove every last trace of the family that was there. One looks up and sees Jonas and Asher.

WORKMAN

Can I help you kids?

ASHER

N-no, we're just --

JONAS

What happened to the family that was here?

WORKMAN

(puzzles, then)

Far as I know, this is a new house.

Jonas and Asher look at each other.

## EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - DAY

The Giver is in the midst of a serious discussion with a pair of ELDERS. Jonas rides up to him and grabs his sleeve.

JONAS

We have to talk.

The Giver, annoyed, GLARES at Jonas and pulls his arm away.

GIVER

Manners, young man.

The other ELDERS exchange glances: they've never seen a child act like this before, certainly not to a Receiver.

JONAS

Don't gimme "manners," you've got to tell me what --

The GIVER GETS IN JONAS'S FACE, speaks THROUGH HIS TEETH.

GIVER  
I WILL TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT I WISH  
TO TELL YOU, WHEN I WISH TO DO SO.

Jonas recoils at the Giver's show of strength.

GIVER  
Now, why don't you GO TO MY LIVING  
QUARTERS and WAIT THERE for me.

Jonas starts to say something, then thinks better of it.

JONAS  
(seething)  
Yes sir.

He turns around and peddles off. The Giver turns to the pair of Elders, who look at him with arched brows.

GIVER  
Sometimes you have to remind them  
of their place or they run amok.

The other Elders smile and nod: kids, what are you gonna do.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

The Giver comes in. Jonas is there waiting. The Giver doesn't look at him; instead, he goes to hang up his outdoor robe. Jonas jumps up and goes to him, eyes blazing.

JONAS  
What happened to Fiona?

The Giver straightens his robe, looks at Jonas with disdain.

GIVER  
We have shared a great deal, young  
man, and that has made us close.  
But I am your elder and you will  
address me with the proper --

JONAS  
Shut up!

\*  
\*

The Giver's eyes blaze, then narrow threateningly.

GIVER  
Excuse me?

\*

JONAS

You've given me enough history to know that all that "authority" crap is meaningless. They transferred Fiona! In the middle of the night!

GIVER

Yes. I know.

JONAS

Why?!

GIVER

Because I told them to.

Jonas is stunned.

JONAS

Y -- you?

GIVER

For her own good. Larissa too. For the sake of the community, the secret of Rosemary must be maintained at all costs.

JONAS

But I loved Fiona!

GIVER

Yes, and I loved my daughter Rosemary.

JONAS

You -- !  
(then, realizing)  
You -- your daughter --

GIVER

Yes. My daughter.

He looks away, out the window, his thoughts quite far away. Then he turns back to Jonas.

GIVER

Now, if you're quite ready, it's time to tell you the story.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Later. The Giver and Jonas sit at the table. The Giver gazes off into the distance.

GIVER  
Beautiful girl. Good listener. I  
loved her so much, you don't know.

\*

JONAS  
You could give me a memory of her.

GIVER  
No. Those are mine.

Jonas nods. Point taken.

GIVER  
She was selected by the committee.  
I was delighted. The two of us  
would have so much to share.  
(then)  
We began training. I tried to only  
give her good memories, but --

\*

JONAS  
But that's not the job.

GIVER  
But that's not the job.  
(beat, then)  
Killed me to give her bad ones.  
But that's the way she wanted it.  
Loneliness, loss, poverty, hunger.  
Terror. She wanted to know them  
all. Didn't want to be spared.

He stops for a moment. It seems like maybe he can't go on.

GIVER  
And once, after a particularly bad  
day, when we were done, she came  
over to me, put her arms around me  
and kissed me on the cheek.

He puts his fingers to his cheek, feeling that kiss again.

GIVER  
Went to see the Chief Elder and  
asked to be released. And back  
then, if someone asked to be  
released, even a Receiver, no one  
could stop them.

JONAS  
That's why the rule's there now.

GIVER

That's why the rule's there now.

JONAS

Was it nice?

GIVER

Was what nice.

JONAS

Her release. Did they tell any good stories?

The Giver gives him a good hard look.

GIVER

Have you seen a release?

JONAS

Yes. At the House of the Old, it was nice, they had drinks --

GIVER

That -- that's a ceremony. Have you seen a release?

JONAS

I -- what.

The Giver gets up and goes to a button on a console.

RECEPTIONIST (ON SPEAKER)

Yes, Receiver?

GIVER

I'd like to see this morning's release of the infant.

RECEPTIONIST

One moment.

The Giver directs Jonas's attention to the enormous video screen, which crackles to life, showing static, then a series of numbers: a timecode. Then a flat, security-cam view of a plain white room. Table, counter, cabinets. Atop the cabinets, a scale. On screen, Jonas's Dad comes into the room, in a hospital-type gown, lovingly cradling a tiny infant boy. He distractedly hums a tuneless little tune. A young female assistant follows him in, carrying an identical-looking boy. Dad places his boy on the scale.

DAD (ON VIDEO)

Six pounds even.

He hands the infant to the assistant and takes the other one from her. He places that one on the scale.

DAD (ON VIDEO)  
 Five pounds, ten ounces. A shrimp!  
 (then, to the assistant)  
 Okay then. Clean that little guy  
 up and take him over to the center.  
 (to the baby in her arms)  
 See you later, little man!

The assistant smiles, nods and takes the baby out. Dad turns to the second baby, still humming his little tune.

DAD  
 Mmmm, okey-dokey.

JONAS  
 Is this where the ceremony starts?

GIVER  
 Watch.

Jonas watches the video as Dad opens a cabinet and takes out a tray with a syringe and a bottle of medicine.

JONAS  
 Ugh. I hate shots. Why do --

GIVER  
Watch.

Jonas is startled by the Giver's harsh tone, but says nothing. He watches as his Dad fills the syringe and then, still humming, carefully directs the needle directly into the baby's forehead. The baby squirms and wails faintly.

JONAS  
 Why's he --

GIVER  
 Sh!

DAD (ON VIDEO)  
 I know, it hurts, but the veins in  
 your arms are too teeny-tiny.

He pushes the plunger on the syringe.

DAD (ON VIDEO)  
 There, that wasn't so bad, was it?

Jonas watches in horrified silence as his Dad, still humming his tuneless little tune, puts the syringe back on the tray and then puts the tray back in the cabinet, as the baby's limbs jerk spasmodically and go completely limp. Jonas trembles, unable to breathe. A tear rolls down his face as his Dad takes out a small carton and lifts the baby's limp body into it. He closes the carton up and carries it to a hatch on the wall. He opens the hatch, lifts the carton up into it, shoves it down a chute, then gives a little wave.

DAD

Bye-bye, little guy.

Dad strolls out of the room, the screen goes dead in a blast of static, then powers off. Jonas cannot take his eyes away from the blank screen. A single tear rolls down his cheek.

GIVER

That is a release.

(then)

Ten years ago I sat on that couch and watched that screen, and I heard my daughter Rosemary say that she would prefer to inject herself.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

The Giver and Jonas up on the roof. Jonas is in shock. Down on the ground, all around them, people go about their days.

JONAS

I can't believe it -- my dad --

GIVER

He's able do it because he doesn't know anything else, he causes death and smiles because he doesn't know what death is. None of them do. Only you and I know.

(beat, then)

When Rosemary released herself, I can't explain it, don't understand it, but the memories I gave her were released, somehow, into the community. People woke up with visions in their heads, didn't know why they were there. Everyone thought they were going crazy. There was panic.

JONAS

That's what you couldn't tell me.

GIVER

No one could tell you. They couldn't tell you because they never knew what happened, and I couldn't tell you because you weren't ready to know. Think: if I told you, first day -- "Jonas, the girl who had this job before you was my daughter and now she's dead because of it" -- Knowing who you were back then, what would you have done?

\*  
\*  
\*

JONAS

So, all this stuff, the secrecy, the special rules -- it's all because the Chief Elder is afraid I'm going to release myself.

\*  
\*

GIVER

Not just the Chief Elder.  
(then)  
I lost one child I love to this community, I won't lose another.

Jonas thinks about that.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE -- EVENING

\*

Jonas walks in the door, deep in thought. Mom is on the couch, looking over some notes for work while Lily plays quietly on the floor. It's a perfect scene of domestic tranquility. As Dad sets the dining room table for dinner, he hums the same tuneless little tune that he hummed during the release of the twin. He looks up and smiles at Jonas.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

DAD

Hey sport, how was your day? Learn anything new?

\*  
\*  
\*

Jonas's eyes flare at his father's unintended gaffe, but then he notices something else amiss in the house.

\*  
\*

JONAS

Why -- why is it so quiet in here?

\*  
\*

DAD

Hm? Oh right, you weren't here.

\*  
\*

JONAS

Here for what?

\*  
\*

MOM  
 (not looking up)  
 Let's just say we're minus one  
 family member.

JONAS  
 What? Where's Gabe?

DAD  
 Gabe went in for his checkup today.

JONAS  
 Is he okay?

DAD  
 Ha! No, I'd say not. Fact is,  
 unless you're around, Gabe is a  
 very unhappy little guy.

LILY  
 Gaby is a naughty baby.

JONAS  
 What happened?

DAD  
 Well, folks down at the Nurturing  
 Center had a little talk, and it's  
 release time for baby Gabe.

JONAS  
 (heart leaps into throat)  
 Release?

DAD  
 Gave it our best shot, kiddo,  
 nothin' left to do. Right?

MOM  
 That's right.

JONAS  
 (trying to stay together)  
 When?

DAD  
 Bright and early tomorrow morning.  
 (then)  
 Who's hungry?

EXT. JONAS'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT \*

One by one, the lights in Jonas's neighborhood go out. The pathway-lamps shine eerie and blue in the night. \*

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT \*

Jonas lies in his bed, still, eyes closed. Then, HIS EYES OPEN. He listens for a moment, then throws off his blankets; he is fully dressed under the covers. \*

EXT. JONAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT \*

Jonas sneaks out the back door of his house. He wears a jacket and his backpack. He is wide-eyed and breathing hard. He is scared to death. He goes to his family's bike rack. His Dad's bike has the specially-designed baby carrier. \*

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT \*

The Giver goes to his desk, sits down, picks up the remote and presses a button. The HOLOGRAM OF ROSEMARY appears at the desk as it did for Jonas. The Giver gives a sad, wistful smile as he sees his daughter once again, and begins a conversation he's acted out a thousand times.

GIVER

Hey Pumpkin.

The Hologram looks up and smiles.

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM

Hey Beanstalk.

GIVER

You have the most beautiful eyes the world, you know that right?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM

(mock embarrassment)  
Do I? Gosh...

GIVER

Whatcha doing?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM

Drawing.

GIVER  
Drawing what?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
A horse.

GIVER  
Can I see?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
(mock exasperation)  
Oh, if you must...

She holds up the drawing.

GIVER  
Nice.

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
Thank you.

GIVER  
If you had a real horse, what would  
you do with it?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
Mm...I'd ride away. All the way to  
Elsewhere.

GIVER  
Sounds nice.  
(his voice breaking)  
Can I come too?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
(coquettish)  
Mmmaybeee...

GIVER  
Hey, listen. You know we've had a  
lot of fun here --

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
Sure.

GIVER  
And you know -- there's other  
memories I have to give you --

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
I know. You told me that.

GIVER  
Ones that aren't so nice --

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
No, I know. But that's okay,  
'cause you know why?

GIVER  
Tell me.

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM  
'Cause I figure, no matter what,  
I'll always have the memory of you.

She smiles a smile of pure innocence and trust. The Giver puts his head in his hands and weeps.

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Jonas walks his Dad's bike to the Giver's door. He checks that no one can see him, then rings the bell. The Giver's face appears in the window; a moment later he is at the door, his face red and puffy from weeping.

GIVER  
Jonas.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Jonas paces as the Giver listens to him.

JONAS  
I can't stay here. I have to get  
out. Go to Elsewhere.

GIVER  
I won't let you do that.

JONAS  
I'm not asking your permission, I'm  
telling you what I'm going to do.

The Giver takes a beat to absorb the shock of that remark.

GIVER  
Then why tell me?

JONAS  
I need your help to get Gabe.

GIVER

Gabe?

JONAS

He's being released tomorrow. I'm taking him tonight, now.

(then)

You could come with us.

GIVER

Impossible.

JONAS

Why?

GIVER

The memories. They don't belong to us, they belong to the community. If either of us were to leave, the memories would stay behind. It would create total chaos.

JONAS

So what?

GIVER

They're still people, Jonas. You're not better than them. The community's needs are more important than yours.

JONAS

Don't you see? This is what the community needs. You lost your daughter. You hold all this together even though you lost your daughter because of it. Didn't you love her?

That hurt. The Giver looks at Jonas sharply, but then something inside him breaks. His resolve crumbles; he hangs his head in weariness and sighs.

GIVER

Yes. I did. I loved her so much.

(then)

But I have to keep on. If I give up, then Rosemary's death was meaningless.

(then)

And now you, you --

JONAS  
And now I'm leaving too.

GIVER  
Don't do this, Jonas. Please.

Jonas reaches over and takes the Giver's hands. He looks into his eyes.

JONAS  
You told me you didn't want to lose another child to this community.  
(Looks at Gabe)  
Well I'm going to make sure that doesn't happen.

He gives the Giver's hands a squeeze, then gets up and heads for the door. The Giver goes after him.

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Jonas storms out the door. The Giver follows him.

GIVER  
You won't make it to Elsewhere, they'll send out security forces, they'll send out jets with heat-seeking gun sights --

JONAS  
I'll take my chances.

The Giver reaches out and GRABS JONAS'S HAND. JONAS'S MIND FILLS WITH A MEMORY:

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY - MEMORY

It is the same doorway, but in the daytime, ten years earlier. JONAS, **AS THE GIVER**, EMBRACES **ROSEMARY** for the last time. ROSEMARY KISSES HIM ON THE CHEEK, TURNS, AND WALKS AWAY FROM HIM. Jonas can only stand and watch helplessly as Rosemary walks away from him, so young, so tragic. She turns and gives Jonas a sweet, sad smile, and JONAS'S FACE MORPHS INTO THAT OF THE GIVER AS THE MEMORY GIVES WAY TO --

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

-- the present moment again. Jonas RECOILS from the shock of the memory. He looks at the Giver, tearful, disturbed.

JONAS

What -- what was that?

GIVER

Love isn't always good, Jonas. The  
parents die, the girl breaks your  
heart, the marriage fails, the  
child leaves you. That's love too.

(then)

It's better this way. Please.

Jonas grabs his bike. He looks doubtful. Maybe it is better  
this way. But then --

JONAS

You showed me what life is. I'm  
going to live it.

He gets on his bike and rides into the darkness. The Giver  
gestures to him, but has no choice but to let him go.

EXT. NURTURING CENTER - NIGHT

Jonas rides his Dad's bike up to the back door of the  
NURTURING CENTER, a low, clean, white, modest building on the  
edge of the community center. As he gets off his bike, he  
sees the security camera mounted by the door. He looks up at  
it, knowing the Giver is watching, then goes inside.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jonas sticks his head around a corner. The hallway is empty  
and the lights dimmed, but the rooms all have large glass  
panels from the waist up. Most of the rooms are dark and  
empty, but a skeleton crew of white-smocked Nurturers go  
about their business here and there, creating pockets of  
light and activity.

Jonas creeps along, crouched down and out of sight, looking  
for the nursery. He hears a door open up ahead, and ducks  
inside one of the darkened rooms.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jonas hides behind a door. We can see, through the office  
windows, a female NURTURER, 30s, come down the hall. She  
comes RIGHT TO THE OFFICE WHERE JONAS IS HIDING. She puts  
her hand on the doorknob and opens the door. Jonas gasps.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS \*

The Nurturer's attention is drawn by a male CO-WORKER behind her, down the hall. \*

CO-WORKER  
Have you seen the C-16 files? \*

NURTURER  
I'm checking on it now. \*

She goes INSIDE THE OFFICE. \*

INT. NURTURING CENTER, OFFICE - CONTINUOUS \*

The Nurterer goes to her DESK and TURNS ON THE LIGHT. There is no sign of Jonas. She rummages around on her desk, murmuring. She finds the file she's looking for and walks out of the room, leaving the light on. \*

After a beat, Jonas's face emerges from BEHIND A CURTAIN. \*

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER \*

Jonas peeks out into the hall. The coast is clear. He zips across the hall, hunched over, peeking up now and then to try to find the nursery. He peeks up once: an empty examining room. He peeks up again: a break room. He peeks up once more: bingo. \*

INT. NURTURING CENTER, NURSERY - CONTINUOUS \*

Rows of clear plastic bassinets, each containing a silent, sleeping infant. Jonas appears in the doorway, looking for Gabe. He slips into the room and scans the rows of faces. Gabe isn't here! Jonas sighs, exasperated. Then, he hears CRYING, coming from a room nearby. There's no mistaking the cry; it's definitely Gabe. \*

Jonas hunches down and creeps through the Nursery until he gets to a special examining room at the back. There, he sees a young female NURTURER with Gabe, rocking him, exasperated. The examining room opens onto both the Nursery and the hallway beyond. Jonas thinks for a beat, then reaches into his backpack. He takes out the TOY WIND-UP TRUCK, carefully winds it up, and sends it speeding across the examining room, just outside of the Nurturer's view, into the hallway, and into the darkened office across the way, where it CRASHES into something fragile. \*

The Nurturer looks up. Happy for any excuse to abandon the fussy baby, she gets up, puts Gabe into a bassinet and heads out the door into the hallway and the office across the way.

The second she's gone, Jonas sneaks into the room, hides behind a cabinet and peeks into Gabe's bassinet. Gabe sees him and SMILES.

GABRIEL

Jo! Jo!

Jonas has to smile, despite the noise. He gently TAKES HOLD of GABE'S HAND.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - MEMORY

Jonas swings in a lightly swinging hammock strung between two palms on a beach somewhere in the Caribbean. Gabe lies asleep on his chest. The sand is white, the water is turquoise and the white waves sigh quietly on the shore.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, NURSERY - NIGHT

Back in the present, Gabe sighs softly, closes his eyes and drifts off to sleep. In the office across the hall, Jonas can see the young female Nurturer joined by a male co-worker who has also heard toy truck crash.

MALE NURTURER

What was that?

YOUNG FEMALE NURTURER

I dunno.

They look around the office, then look at each other.

YOUNG FEMALE NURTURER

You hear that?

MALE NURTURER

Hear what?

YOUNG FEMALE NURTURER

Gabe stopped crying.

Beat. They both listen.

MALE NURTURER

Should we go check on him?

YOUNG FEMALE NURTURER  
And get him started again?

They both laugh softly and go off down the hall together.

Jonas sighs, then takes Gabe out of the bassinet.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jonas hurries down the hall, Gabe in his arms. Unseen by him, a Nurturer comes out of an examining room and sees him.

NURTURER  
Hey!

Jonas now BOLTS for the back door.

EXT. NURTURING CENTER - NIGHT

Jonas dashes out the back door of the Nurturing Center, Gabe fast asleep in his arms. He quickly loads the baby into the plastic carrier on the back of his bike and rides away from the building as a pair of NURTURERS come after him. He easily outpaces them.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - NIGHT

Jonas rides across the dark, silent quad, heart pounding in his chest. Suddenly, all around, BANKS OF FLOODLIGHTS COME ON. SPEAKERS on the lamp posts CRACKLE TO LIFE.

SPEAKER  
Your attention. Jonas, Receiver-in-Training, is absent from his home and was seen removing a newchild from the Nurturing Center. Will all citizens please report to the Auditorium for a Search-and-Rescue procedure.

Jonas panics and heads for the House of the Old.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - MOMENTS LATER

Jonas rides around the corner of the House of the Old, and pulls his bike behind the stand of cypress trees.

He gets off and crouches in the shadows. He watches as a SECURITY VAN pulls into the lane before him.

A half-dozen SECURITY OFFICERS get out of the van, flashlight beams bouncing. Jonas watches as the officer in charge gathers his men around and instructs them on where to search. \*

Jonas hears a noise, turns and sees the CHIEF ELDER crossing the quad with the CHIEF OF SECURITY, striding to the Giver's living quarters. \*

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

The Chief Elder rings the Giver's bell. The Giver answers.

CHIEF ELDER  
I need your surveillance screen.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

The huge surveillance screen is on. Dozens of different views of the community are on display. The Giver, the Chief Elder and the security officers scan the screen, looking for some sign of Jonas. On different screens we see squads of security officers, and now we see ordinary families in robes and pajamas, armed with flashlights, also searching.

CHIEF ELDER  
He's got a baby and a bicycle, he's going to stick out.

CHIEF OF SECURITY  
You say this screen covers the entire community?

GIVER  
Every inch.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - NIGHT

Jonas pushes his bike to the corner of the building closest to the New Bridge. He looks up. Above him, he sees the two cameras, scanning back and forth. And he sees that their blind spot is a straight line, leading diagonally across the quad to the bridge. He waits for a security van to clear the path, then slowly heads out across the lawn. \*

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

The Chief Elder, the Chief of Security and the Giver scan the screens in vain. They grow frustrated.

CHIEF ELDER  
Where is he?

CHIEF OF SECURITY  
He has to be here.

The Giver's attention is drawn to TWO SCREENS next to each other, the two cameras at the corner of the House of the Old. He sees that the two images, next to each other, have a blind spot in the center. He looks at that gap and grins.

GIVER  
Well, he is a resourceful boy --

EXT. COMMUNITY - NIGHT

Jonas pushes the bike through the grass, keeping inside the narrow range of the camera's blind spot. Suddenly, from behind a bush emerges ASHER, who GRABS the bike's handlebars.

JONAS  
Ah!

ASHER  
(a harsh whisper)  
Give me the bike!

JONAS  
No!

ASHER  
Give it!

He tugs at the handlebars. Jonas tugs back.

JONAS  
Asher! Don't make me hurt you!

ASHER  
I'm tryin' t' help you! Gimme the bike, I'll ride it over by the fish hatchery, they'll think you fell in and drowned, they'll drag the river and you can hide 'til you figure out what to do!

It takes Jonas a moment to realize that Asher is sincere.

JONAS  
W-where will I hide?

ASHER  
 (pointing)  
 The new bridge! Remember?

JONAS  
 (thinks a moment, then)  
 Okay. Good.

He takes Gabe out of the carrier as Asher takes the bike.

ASHER  
 What are you tryin' t'do, anyway?

JONAS  
 Can't tell you. You'll know soon.

ASHER  
 Well, I'm the one who was always  
 pissed because nothing happens  
 around here.  
 (touching his arm)  
 Good luck.

JONAS  
 Thanks. For everything.

ASHER  
 Sure.

He gets on the bike and RACES OFF.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

The Chief Elder and the Chief of Security see the figure of Asher on the bike, racing across the quad.

CHIEF ELDER  
 There!

The Chief of Security grabs his walkie-talkie.

CHIEF OF SECURITY  
 Target on bicycle, heading North-  
 east toward Fish Hatchery --

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - SAME

Jonas watches as all the flashlights in the area immediately TURN toward Asher. Citizens and Security Officers alike TAKE OFF RUNNING after the shadowy figure racing away on the bike.

Jonas smiles, hugs Gabe to his chest and quietly slips away in the opposite direction.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Jonas creeps along the riverbank, crouching behind a row of hedges, looking up at a row of SECURITY OFFICERS standing guard at the bridge.

He darts out from behind the hedge and is almost HIT by a SECURITY VAN, CAREERING UP TO THE CURB. The doors open and MORE SECURITY OFFICERS pile out of the van and over to the bridge. They meet other guards and talk in hushed tones. \*

While they confab, Jonas ducks down into the shadow of the van and takes from his backpack the MR. MICROPHONE set from the Giver's Bunker. He sets the Mr. Microphone AMP on the ground behind the hedge, then creeps toward the bridge. When he is almost to the end of the hedge, he picks up the mike. \*

JONAS  
YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME ALIVE!

The SECURITY OFFICERS all TURN IN THE DIRECTION OF THE AMP, which is a good thirty feet away from Jonas's location. They TROMP OFF TO INVESTIGATE, and Jonas ZIPS ACROSS THE LANE and UNDER THE BRIDGE ANCHORAGE. \*

EXT. UNDERSIDE OF BRIDGE - NIGHT

Jonas goes to the panel under the anchorage that was hanging loose the last time he was here, with Asher. Now it is held in place by a single wing-nut. He quickly undoes it with one hand, holding Gabe in the other. The panel falls open and Jonas pokes his head up inside the underside of the bridge.

INT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Jonas peers into the interior of the bridge, and we see that Asher has, indeed, turned this into his own private fort. A nook has been made into a little playspace with a scrap of carpeting, some pillows and books. A small ladder lies nearby; Jonas PULLS IT DOWN to climb up inside the bridge. Once he is inside, he looks around. He can see the struts and beams, the bridge's infrastructure, heading off across the bridge. It looks to him like it'll be a tight squeeze, but not impossible. He takes a deep breath, clasps Gabe to him, and starts to head across.

He has to scrunch down to avoid hitting his head, and he has to be careful to step only on the struts, not on the light sheets of cosmetic sheet metal, but he slowly makes his way across the bridge.

EXT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, up on top of the bridge, the Security Officers stand guard, oblivious to what is happening under their feet.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Meanwhile, downriver a stretch, Asher pulls up to the riverbank. He looks around: dozens of flashlight beams come bouncing across the community, trying to catch up to him. He tosses Jonas's father's bike down on the concrete riverbank, then takes off running as fast as he can. He dives behind a tree and watches as the first wave of SECURITY OFFICERS arrives and finds the bike half in the river. He smiles as he sees their panicked responses and calls for backup.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

On the OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE, a metal panel is KICKED OPEN and FALLS TO THE GROUND. Jonas drops down onto the ground, then reaches up into the interior of the bridge and takes down the still-sleeping Gabe. He looks across the river: he can see the flashlights and commotion where Asher has shoved his bike into the water. He smiles, hoists the sleeping Gabe onto his shoulders and takes off into the night.

EXT. COMMUNITY -- MORNING

The sun rises over the community. Everything is bright and airy as before, except we now see the many more of the black-suited SECURITY FORCES patrolling everywhere.

EXT. COUNCIL OF ELDERS HALL - MORNING

The COUNCIL OF ELDERS HALL across the lane from the Auditorium. Like the other buildings in town, it is a grand, inspiring edifice, soaring and elegant in its hope.

INT. COUNCIL OF ELDERS CHAMBER - MORNING

A large, bright, airy room, with high ceilings and skylights, dominated by a large, raised, semi-circular COUNTER, reminiscent of the bench of the Supreme Court.

The COUNCIL OF ELDERS, all handsome, middle-aged men and women, dressed in their formal robes, sit at their places at the bench, looking very serious indeed. The Giver stands before the Council, giving his report of events, trying hard to reign in his emotions.

GIVER

The Receiver-in-Training appeared  
at my living quarters on a bicycle. \*

ELDER 1

On his father's bicycle. \*

ELDER 2

Theft of parental property.

CHIEF ELDER

And what else.

GIVER

The newchild carrier.

CHIEF ELDER

So you knew that he planned to take  
the newchild. \*

ELDER 1

Kidnapping.

ELDER 2

Endangerment.

GIVER

I saw he had a carrier.

CHIEF ELDER

But he told you he --

GIVER

Yes. He did, yes, I'm sorry --

ELDER 1

Aiding and abetting --

ELDER 2

Conspiracy --

CHIEF ELDER

Have you any idea where he might be  
going?

GIVER

Yes. I do. Elsewhere.

Concern and disbelief from the Elders. The Giver sighs and makes a gesture of helplessness. The Chief Elder narrows her eyes at him, displeased with his attitude.

CHIEF ELDER

Receiver. You understand you have been brought before us on the gravest of possible charges.

GIVER

Yes. Yes I do. I also understand that the Council, due respect, has no idea what they're talking about.

Gasps and consternation from the Elders.

CHIEF ELDER

Well. Then perhaps you would like to enlighten us.

GIVER

I told Jonas, for months, about his duties as Receiver. I emphasized, over and over, that it is his duty to put the needs of the community above his own. I tried to teach him that there is a higher purpose to the office of Receiver, but here we are, and the fact is, he is the one who has taught me.

CHIEF ELDER

Oh? So tell me. Tell me, Receiver, how theft, kidnapping and treason amount to selfless serving of the common good.

GIVER

I tried to teach him what the community wants. But Jonas knows what we need. He has given up everything, everything he knows, everything he cares for, in order to give us what we need.

CHIEF ELDER

And what do we need?

GIVER

That, Chief Elder, will become apparent in due time.

The Chief Elder gives a snort of disgust.

CHIEF ELDER  
I've heard enough.

She signals to a pair of SECURITY OFFICERS, who come and take the Giver by the arms.

CHIEF ELDER  
Thank you for your testimony. You will be remanded to the Detention Center until further notice.

The security officers lead him out.

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

Bright sunlight. Fields of soybeans stretch in all directions, an unbroken plane of flat leafy green. In a drainage ditch running alongside the field, Jonas hikes along, carrying Gabe against his chest. Jonas looks tired and dirty, but Gabe looks none the worse for wear.

JONAS  
This isn't so bad, is it?  
(off Gabe's gurgle)  
We'll stop and eat soon, and then everything will be fine.

He hears a noise off to his right. He freezes. He hears, very nearby, a clicking and whirring. It's all around him. He looks around wildly, trying to pinpoint it. Suddenly, WATER sprouts from a hundred hidden sprinklers, sending canopies of water up into the sky. Gabe squeals in delight and Jonas laughs at his paranoia. They continue on, easily dodging the water, heading to a slope that leads to a stand of cypresses. Jonas hikes up the slope and squeezes between two trees and finds himself...

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

...in the broad black parking lot of a long, low, bunker-like building. Jonas takes it in: the place looks deserted; the air is perfectly still and quiet. Jonas carries Gabe piggy-back across the parking lot. He keeps his eyes peeled, but nothing seems to be amiss. He looks down. At his feet is a SEAM, where the BLACKTOP of the asphalt gives way to a strip of BLACK METAL. He looks up and down the length of the seam: its purpose is unclear. He continues on his way. Suddenly, the asphalt beneath his feet begins to MOVE. Rumbling FILLS THE AIR as the blacktop SPLITS OPEN BEFORE JONAS'S EYES, A DEEP, SQUARE PIT OPENING IN FRONT OF HIM. He runs toward the edge of the parking lot, but it is enormous.

Behind him, the PIT continues to OPEN, growing WIDER AND WIDER. At the same time, LARGE DOORS on the SIDES of the BUNKER SLIDE UPWARDS and DOZENS OF BLACK PERSONNEL CARRIERS EMERGE, DRIVING ACROSS THE BLACKTOP TOWARDS JONAS. Jonas runs like hell across the blacktop as the carriers ROLL IMPLACABLY TOWARD HIM. A DEAFENING ROAR FILLS THE AIR AS A HARRIER JET LIKE WE SAW AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MOVIE EMERGES FROM ITS UNDERGROUND HANGAR AND TAKES OFF INTO THE AIR. Jonas has, apparently, stumbled across a security base.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Gabe CRIES IN TERROR as Jonas jumps off the blacktop and rolls down a slope into another drainage ditch. Right behind him, a ROW OF BLACK PERSONNEL CARRIERS SCREECH TO A HALT. Black uniformed SECURITY OFFICERS PILE OUT OF THE CARRIERS, CARRYING SHOCK-STICKS, CHARGING DOWN THE HILL AFTER JONAS. Jonas runs as fast as he can along the drainage ditch. This ditch runs along a field of CORN, so he is well-hidden as he charges blindly ahead through the field. He can hear the shouts and commands of the men behind, closing in. He stops and sees a rusted STORM DRAIN.

EXT. FIELD - SAME

A group of Security Officers charge through the drainage ditch, breaking cornstalks in their wake. They pass by the sluice drain and move on, barking commands and updates up and down along their ranks.

INT. STORM DRAIN TUNNEL - DAY

Jonas carries Gabe through a dark, dripping drainage tunnel. He splashes along through a thin trickle of water. He can hear the voices of the men looking for him up above. He listens to hear which way they're going and then heads in the opposite direction.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Some time later, in another part of the corn field, a sluice drain cover pops open and Jonas emerges with a confused, startled-looking Gabe. Jonas looks around to see if the coast is clear. There are no men in evidence. He puts Gabe up on the ground and hauls himself out of the drain.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Jonas hustles Gabe through a row of cornstalks. From above comes the DEAFENING SCREAM of the HARRIER JET. Jonas FALLS TO THE GROUND and COVERS HIS AND GABE'S EARS.

INT. HARRIER JET - SAME

FROM THE JET PILOT'S POV, we see the corn field through his heat-sensitive visor. Jonas and Gabe are two BRIGHT WHITE BLOBS amid a sea of dark gray vegetation.

PILOT

I have targets on heat-sensitive viewing at nine-zero-seven-alpha.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

DOWN ON THE GROUND, Jonas grips Gabe's hands in his own, transferring A MEMORY --

EXT. SUBURBAN BACK YARD - DAY

Jonas and Gabe PLAY IN THE SNOW under a sparkling blue sky in the back yard of a middle-class suburban home. Jonas tickles Gabe as they roll in the snow. Gabe picks up snow and rubs it in Jonas's face. Apple-cheeked with cold, they laugh as their steamy breath fills the air.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Jonas and Gabe SHIVER with the memory of cold. Their breath turns VISIBLE.

INT. HARRIER JET - CONTINUOUS

From the PILOT'S POV, Jonas's and Gabe's white HEAT SIGNATURES DISAPPEAR into the haze of GREY VEGETATION.

PILOT

Cancel that, targets no longer in view. Possible system glitch.

## EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Jonas and Gabe shiver with cold and fear as the Harrier jet BANKS and ZOOMS OFF, looking for easier-to-read targets. Jonas looks up to make sure the jet is gone, then picks up Gabe and continues RUNNING THROUGH THE CORN. And now he can hear, off in the distance, a series of HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLES. It seems that the SECURITY PATROLS are using WHISTLES to ALERT EACH OTHER as to their whereabouts as they search through the seven-foot cornfield. Jonas hears whistles off to his left and moves to his right, then hears whistles off to his right and moves to his left. He can't see anyone coming through the corn, he can't see more than a few feet in front of his face, he just runs and runs until -- BAM! He runs smack into a SECURITY OFFICER, running in the opposite direction. Both of them go sprawling into the corn. Gabe is startled and begins to CRY in a high, piercing wail. The Security Officer, also startled, takes a moment to find his whistle and raise it to his lips. Jonas sees what he is about to do and COLD-COCKS HIM RIGHT ACROSS THE FACE. The Security officer gives him a look of shock (his training has not prepared him for the possibility of physical violence) and promptly PASSES OUT. Gabe sees this and stops crying out of sheer surprise. Jonas looks at the unconscious Security Officer, then looks at his fist, then looks at Gabe.

JONAS

Did you know I could do that?

Gabe looks doubtful. Jonas smiles, but there's no time to celebrate; the whistles are coming closer on both sides. He CHARGES FORWARD.

## EXT. DITCH - DAY

Jonas and Gabe CRASH OUT OF THE CORN and into another deep DRAINAGE DITCH. Before him is a STEEP EMBANKMENT. Jonas looks around and sees, on either side of him, SECURITY PATROLS. Men in both patrols SEE HIM, BLOW FURIOUSLY ON THEIR WHISTLES and CHARGE. Jonas clutches Gabe to his chest, panting with exhaustion.

JONAS

I'm not gonna let them get you. I don't know what I'm gonna do, but I'm not gonna let 'em get you.  
 (he looks Gabe in the eye)  
 You trust me?

Gabe can only give him a worried look. Jonas steels himself, then CHARGES UP THE EMBANKMENT.

Patrols on either side of him CHARGE UP ALONG WITH HIM, DRAWING CLOSER AND CLOSER. Jonas reaches the TOP OF THE EMBANKMENT AND --

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

-- PLUNGES INTO A MAN-MADE RIVER. Jonas, surprised and scared, clutches Gabe to his chest as they ride down the swift current of the river. He looks behind him at the rows of SECURITY PATROLS rushing up to the river bank, helpless to try and catch them now.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Jonas and Gabe are carried along the swift current almost like a flume ride. The angle of the river grows steeper and the channel narrows, so the flow picks up speed. Jonas must struggle to keep his and Gabe's head above water. He has no idea where he is. The current is too swift to swim to the concrete embankment. Presently, the channel he and Gabe are in ENDS, and the two of them PLUNGE down a short dropoff into a HUGE RIVER with an EXTREMELY fast current.

\*  
\*

EXT. LARGE RIVER - CONTINUOUS

This river is the mother of them all, the end product of all waste water from the entire community. There are trees, garbage, pieces of construction waste, flotsam and jetsam, all rushing downstream towards who knows what. Jonas swims as best he can to a passing TREE and HANGS ON FOR DEAR LIFE. The current moves FASTER AND FASTER as Jonas sees that the river is flowing in the direction of a row of gigantic WEATHER TOWERS, ten thousand feet tall, looking to us like enormous radar towers, generating the positive ions needed to keep the weather a constant 72 degrees. A ROARING SOUND fills the air as Jonas realizes that they are heading toward a MASSIVE WATERFALL. A COLUMN OF MIST rises up in the air before them. Jonas sees other pieces of wreckage PLUNGE OUT OF SIGHT as they go over the falls. He tries desperately to SWIM towards the shore, but the situation is hopeless. Jonas and Gabe draw ever closer to the falls. The river is so wide and the dropoff so steep that they might as well be sailing OFF THE EDGE OF THE WORLD.

THEN, at the last moment, the river breaks up into several smaller conduits, and the current DIVERTS Jonas and Gabe into a SLUICE PIPE that could not be seen from the surface.

INT. SLUICE PIPE - CONTINUOUS

Jonas and Gabe SHOOT DOWN the sluice pipe, down down down, Jonas clutching onto Gabe with all his strength.

EXT. RIVER, ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Jonas and Gabe SHOOT OUT THE END OF THE SLUICE PIPE and SPLASH DOWN INTO...

...A REAL RIVER, passing through a landscape that we would recognize as NATURAL, with FOREST and ROCKS, HILLS and DALES, SNOW AND ICE, and, in the distance, MOUNTAINS. Jonas and Gabe SURFACE, spitting water and gasping, suddenly FREEZING.

Jonas swims to the shore and hauls himself and Gabe up onto the riverbank. They sit there, panting and stunned, in a landscape utterly natural to us but utterly alien to them. Jonas looks back to the waterfall. THERE is the EDGE of the world he knew.

We PULL BACK TO AN EXTREME WIDE SHOT so that we can now we can see that Jonas's old world is an enormous MAN-MADE PLATEAU, stretching from horizon to horizon, a vast flat table, an artificial mesa for an artificial community.

Back by the riverside, Jonas gasps with disbelief.

JONAS

We made it, Gabe! We're Elsewhere!

On the other side of the enormous weather towers, it is 72 degrees and mild. On this side, it is December in the mountains, very cold and very wet. SNOW covers the riverbanks and the surrounding forest.

Jonas takes a look around. The easiest path is a steep hill that rises up into a pine forest.

JONAS

We've got to get warm. A hike'll get my blood circulating.

He hikes up the hill and into the trees.

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

Jonas hikes uphill in knee-deep snow, panting with effort. The light is fading. Snow crunches under his shoes. Gabe peeks out from inside his jacket, confused.

JONAS

Doesn't look much like home, huh?

Gabe looks from the landscape to Jonas with concern.

JONAS

It's okay. We'll be okay.

But he's not so sure. Gabe SHIVERS.

JONAS

We'll be okay. I promise.

He picks up the pace. His breath becomes hoarse. There is nothing but woods anywhere around him, and the wind is picking up, blowing snow into his face. Jonas pulls his jacket tight around himself and trudges on. He keeps his head down and, grunting with effort, climbs toward the top of the ridge.

JONAS

We'll make it Gabe, I promise.  
We'll make it.

FROM JONAS'S POV, we see the ground shake and blur as the air is filled with the sound of his heavy breathing. Snow and fallen trees and sticks pass before us.

Jonas's breath becomes labored and shallow. He looks at his hands; they are grey and trembling. He is on the verge of tears. He cannot stop: if he does, they will both die.

JONAS

We'll make it. We'll make it.

Jonas suddenly STOPS, and STARES.

For there, in the snow, is a sled.

Jonas has reached the top of the ridge. There, in a small clearing, parked under a tall pine, is a sled. Not the same sled as in the first memory he received; this one is green, and plastic. But it is a sled just the same.

Jonas stares at the sled. He blinks, thinking perhaps it will disappear. But it doesn't. He reaches out and nudges it with one foot. It seems to be real.

He LAUGHS and sits down on it. Gabe looks at the sled, then looks at Jonas, confused. Jonas reaches his bare hand into the snow and fumbles around, looking for the rope. And there it is. He pulls it, hard and grey, out of the snow.

He looks down the other side of the ridge: there it is, a sled run, winding through the trees. Jonas looks down at Gabe.

JONAS

Ready?

He puts his other bare hand into the snow and shoves off. The sled's runners crunch into the snow, then begin to pick up speed, then begin to glide.

EXT. HILLSIDE, FOREST - CONTINUOUS

The sled courses downhill, picking up speed. Jonas expertly steers it through and around the trees, avoiding dropoffs and ridges. A smile spreads across his face as he enjoys the pure sensation of it all. Gabe smiles, then LAUGHS at the new sensation. Jonas then LEANS BACK and also LAUGHS as we --

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

-- FLASH to Jonas's CLASSROOM. Everyone listens politely to the Instructor drone on about fractions. And at the back of the room ASHER LETS OUT A BIG, LOUD LAUGH.

Everyone TURNS AND LOOKS AT HIM. He looks startled, but he CAN'T STOP LAUGHING, and we --

EXT. HILLSIDE, FOREST - CONTINUOUS

-- FLASH BACK to Jonas, beginning to master the controls of the sled, Gabe's eyes widening with surprise as trees and rocks hurtle past them, and we --

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

-- FLASH to LILY, outside on the playground, playing a hand-slapping game with a friend. Lily suddenly STOPS AND STARES at her HAND. It is BECOMING PINK. She looks UP AT HER FRIEND, who suddenly looks very concerned. Her friend's face is ALSO BECOMING PINK. And the SKY IS TURNING A DEEP, RICH SHADE OF BLUE. And we --

EXT. HILLSIDE, FOREST - CONTINUOUS

-- FLASH back to Jonas and Gabe on the sled as they NARROWLY BRUSH PAST A LARGE ROCK, WHOOPING IN SURPRISE, and we --

INT. NURTURING CENTER - SAME

-- FLASH to Jonas's DAD, who is examining a Newchild at the Nurturing Center. He suddenly LOOKS UP, thunderstruck. His ASSISTANT, preparing a shot, turns and SEES HIM, eyes wide, mouth agape, as he suddenly CLUTCHES THE INFANT TO HIS CHEST IN A TEARFUL EMBRACE, and we --

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EXT. HILLSIDE, FOREST - CONTINUOUS

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-- FLASH to Jonas and Gabe on the sled again as they SHOOT OFF A LOW LEDGE and are AIRBORNE for a moment, gasping with the sudden weightlessness, CRUNCHING BACK DOWN onto the slope, getting right back onto the trail and spraying powder onto a large tree, and we --

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INT. DETENTION CELL - SAME

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-- FLASH to THE GIVER, in a small white cubicle in the DETENTION CENTER, RECLINING ON A SMALL GREY BUNK, in the SAME POSTURE AS JONAS ON THE SLED. A SMILE SPREADS ACROSS HIS FACE as he BEGINS TO SENSE JONAS'S FREEDOM. He gives a loud, triumphant, liberating BURST OF LAUGHTER.

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INT. DETENTION CENTER - SAME

Out in the corridor, amid many other cell doors, we hear the Giver's LAUGHTER echoing. Two SECURITY OFFICERS look up at the Giver's cell door, then at each other, confused, and we --

EXT. HILLSIDE, FOREST - SAME

-- FLASH back to JONAS as he rockets downhill, toward a clearing. He closes his eyes, the wind blowing back his hair, in perfect bliss.

JONAS  
We made it, Gabe. We made it.

We FADE TO WHITE...

\*

EXT. FIELD - DAY

...and FADE IN on a SEA OF BRIGHT YELLOW FLOWERS, under a BRILLIANT BLUE SKY, in a huge GREEN FIELD.

And in the CENTER of that field is FIONA, her hair BLAZING RED, wearing a BRIGHT BLUE sundress. She plucks a flower from the ground and holds it close, admiring the depths of its colors. She looks up at the sky, closing her eyes in the bright sunlight. She smiles, spreads her arms and FALLS LUXURIANTLY BACK INTO THE GRASS, clutching the flower to her breast, feeling the sun on her skin like a loving embrace.