

THE GIVER

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Based on the novel The Giver
by Lois Lowry

20 January 2013

EXT. THE FOOT OF THE WATERFALL - EARLY MORNING

CHAOS. A crashing and whirling place, but no sound. The violent, intensity of the torrent makes this WALL OF WATER as impenetrable as stone.

This world is a paradox of neither color nor black & white.

We stay here in the deluge of water as two VOICES speak - that of a stern WOMAN and that of an OLD MAN.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Then it is final? You have made
your decision?

OLD MAN (O.S.)
I have.

WOMAN (O.S.)
And you are certain?

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Are we ever certain?

We begin to rise slowly and then, gaining momentum, soaring up and up and up the cascading WALL OF WATER. The ROARING of the Falls is introduced, first quietly, then growing louder.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Yes we are. We are always certain.
And yet we cannot suffer another
mistake-

OLD MAN (O.S.)
(Bristling.)
We have been watching this boy
since he was a Newchild. He follows
all Rules of The Community...

We crest the edge and emerge onto a wide, still RESERVOIR, water like glass. No wind. Giant PILLARS pierce the surface and reach to the sky, their tops disappearing in the atmospheric haze thousands of feet above.

OLD MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...He embraces and champions
Sameness. He has never *Lied*. He has
Integrity, Intelligence, Courage-

WOMAN (O.S.)
But you are certain he has...that
he has...*it*.

Beyond the RESERVOIR is a PLATEAU. We spot TWO DISTANT FIGURES moving on bicycles across the sandy expanse.

THE SOUND OF SCREECHING BRAKES.

SMASH CUT TO:

A GLIMMERING WHEEL STOPS SUDDENLY IN A CLOUD OF DUST.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Chief Elder, I believe the boy has
The Capacity to See Beyond.

EXT. TALL FIELDS - DAY

A tight shot of a TEEN's clear, sapphire eyes. A bead of sweat falls onto his brow. He wipes it away with his wrist.

Then, side-by-side, astride two bicycles:

ASHER, a stocky teen (*just* beyond regulation weight) with shaggy hair (*just* beyond regulation length) that falls onto his lashes. ASHER grins, mischievously.

Beside him is JONAS, dimpled and lean. He is the one with the sapphire eyes. JONAS is breathing hard, exhausted.

ASHER
(Out of breath.)
Maybe my Assignment will be in the
Department of Recreation.

JONAS
(Also out of breath.)
Thank you for "sharing your dream."

ASHER laughs, then playfully pouts.

JONAS (CONT'D)
(With a smile.)
Oh, have I upset you, Asher? I
apologize.

ASHER
(With mock-formality.)
I reluctantly accept your apology,
Jonas. But I am even more sorry
that you will be Assigned to work
in the *House of the Old*.

JONAS
I think I'd like that.

ASHER
 At least you'd be with Fiona.
 There's never been a more certain
 job than hers.

JONAS'S eyes dart nervously at the mention of FIONA.

JONAS
 I'm not sure anything is certain.

ASHER
 (Tightening his grip
 around the handlebar.)
 Huh? Everything is certain. There
 are *hopes* but there are never
surprises.

A BANG from above. The boys jump, surprised. BLACK JETS, like a murder of crows, race above in perfect formation. Both boys look up, transfixed.

ASHER (CONT'D)
 (Gazing above in wonder.)
 Now THAT's an Assignment...

JONAS
 Show up late to class one more time
 and you'll be lucky to be Assigned
 Vice Chancellor of Waste
 Management.

They watch as the jets turn, circling slowly overhead. Then-

ASHER
 (Pointing at a blurry spot
 in the distance.)
 THERE!

On the boundary of the Plateau and Reservoir is a lone Tree.

JONAS
There what?

ASHER
 Go!!!

ASHER shoots off, peddling with fury. He laughs.

JONAS
 (Shouting after him.)
 It's...*Asher*! It's against the
 rules to race!!

EXT. THE PLATEAU - CONTINUOUS

Wide: dirt spirals up as ASHER pumps his legs, gaining distance from JONAS. JONAS sighs then pushes off, trying to keep up. The boys fly along the expanse, their hair blowing.

JONAS
(Breathing hard.)
We're not supposed to be by the
edge!

ASHER cackles, leaving JONAS behind.

Then, ASHER slides on the dirt, suddenly tipping.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Whoaaa!

At the last moment, ASHER rights himself, pivoting. Another grin fires across his face. He's OK. What a thrill. And boom - ASHER's off again - speeding forward, nearing the tree.

JONAS is not far behind, pumping his legs harder and harder. ASHER is huffing and puffing. A strength grows in JONAS and he catches up. ASHER looks back, agitated.

ASHER
Cheating is against The Rules!

JONAS
How could I cheat!!??

They're neck and neck. Then, JONAS pulls forward slightly.

ASHER
Stop it!

JONAS smiles and laughs to himself. The Tree is now in spitting distance.

ASHER (CONT'D)
(Huffing.)
You're...not...gonna...beat-

An EXPLOSIVE BLAST. A SINGLE BLACK JET is suddenly directly above the boys, only 20 feet from their heads. It ROARS.

At the moment they spot the JET, ASHER diverts himself quickly to the side, but JONAS squeezes his brakes and flips over the handlebars. **BAM.**

JONAS lies on his back in the sand, just by the edge of the ravine, staring up at the JET.

Then, like a bumble bee deciding not to start a fight, the JET glides up and away, far from the distant coalition of other JETS in the sky.

The camera closes in on JONAS. We next see up from his perspective. ASHER peers over JONAS, looking down at his friend. Their eyes meet and eyebrows rise - "What was THAT?"

EXT. THE COMMUNITY - MORNING

Quick shots of the neat, orderly community. Once a rest, it is now awakened:

Bike paths where WOMEN and MEN ride to work at a relaxed clip through the warm, clear morning air. Modest houses where small children are ushered out the door.

There are grassy quads of flat open space. Fountains everywhere. The place has the air of a beautiful, well-tended college campus.

There are no streets because there are no cars. There is no commercial zone because there is no commerce: no billboards, no stores, no advertising clutter.

Street Cleaners and Landscape Workers are busy at their work. Friendly Security Officers keep an eye on things and smile at passersby. Peace reigns. Life is good.

NOTE ON STYLE: Although everyone's clothes are different, they all look as though they were chosen from the same catalog of four mix-and-match choices. Each outfit 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 SURVEILLANCE: "Friendly" security cameras and wall-mounted speakers are everywhere. They are not ominous, however, not a 'Big Brother.' They seem to make no real impression on anyone, one way or another. Simply, they are just part of the way things are.

EXT. A BIKE PATH - MORNING

JONAS and ASHER wheel their bicycles down a path. People pass them. JONAS hobbles, looking down at his skinned knee.

JONAS

You don't happen to have a-

ASHER pulls a glassy capsule from his pocket. He pops it open and a white pill falls into his palm. He hands it to JONAS who swallows it.

JONAS looks again at his knee. He extends his leg back and forth. No pain. They continue on the path.

ASHER

I've never seen a Jet break formation before.

JONAS

Was he looking at us?

ASHER

He was probably impressed with my bicycle moves.

From a backpack, ASHER produces an apple, in a form-fitting glass container. There is no apple stem. He removes the apple and tosses the fruit behind his back and over his shoulder. JONAS watches the flourish and, midway in the arc over ASHER's back, something peculiar happens: the apple blurs into a fluttering streak of smeared 'red,' if 'red' meant anything... The apple lands back in ASHER's hand.

JONAS'S eyes go wide.

JONAS

Don't eat- (!)

ASHER sinks his teeth into the flesh of the apple - *CRUNCH*.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

A sleek, modern building on a perfectly tended grass lawn. Bike ports hold dozens of bikes in orderly rows.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Stone and steel hallways. Lines of STUDENTS, arranged by age, file through the hall. They buzz with excitement, though there is an order to everything - this isn't a chaotic mess.

JONAS and ASHER pass through the hallway. A TONE.

SPEAKER

Good morning. No cause for alarm.
The low-flying aircraft you may
have seen was being manned by a
Pilot-In-Training.

(MORE)

SPEAKER (CONT'D)
 He misread his nav-instructions and
 made a wrong turn.
 (Almost a joke.)
 He will, of course, be Released.

Twitters of laughter from the STUDENTS.

ASHER
 I guess that's that.

JONAS looks uncomfortable. He then watches as ASHER finishes the apple - eating even the core. There are no seeds.

A three-note MELODIOUS TONE signals the start of class. JONAS looks to the TONE, then to ASHER, who has suddenly vanished.

JONAS
 But-
 (Looking around. Where'd
 ASHER go?)
 Ash?

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

In the middle of a bright, airy room is a large, highly polished ring-shaped table. There are no books, pens, or paper in sight. JONAS stands alongside his classmates around its circumference. Next to him is FIONA, a quiet, pretty girl with beautiful hair. A male INSTRUCTOR is at the focal point in the center of the ring.

The class is in the middle of the morning anthem.

CLASS
 (Chanting in unison.)
 -SPEAK WITH MANNERS AND PRECISION.
 DOUBT AND FEAR IMPAIR THE VISION.
 LOOK UPON EACH OTHER'S FACES,
 SOON WE'LL HAVE OUR PROPER PLACES.

JONAS looks at FIONA a long moment as they recite. Feeling his gaze, she looks back at him. He turns away.

CLASS (CONT'D)
 WE ARE ONE WITHOUT OBJECTION,
 IN THIS WORLD OF PURE PERFECTION.

As soon as they finish, the INSTRUCTOR motions them to sit. As the class sits, JONAS steals a look at the back of the room where an ELDER OBSERVER sits, taking notes.

INSTRUCTOR

I know you are all excited for tomorrow's Ceremony of the Grown. You Oaks will become Adults. Well, rest assured, you each have a proper place in our community and lifelong, careful observations have been made to-

Suddenly, the door flies open and ASHER bursts in.

ASHER

I apologize for insulting my learning community with my lateness.

PIERRE, a student leans over to INGER, another.

PIERRE

Surprise, surprise...

JONAS and FIONA exchange an amused look.

CLASS

(In unison.)

We accept your apology, Asher.

ASHER

(To the ELDER OBSERVER in the back.)

Please don't make me Vice Chancellor of Waste Management.

Everyone laughs, including the INSTRUCTOR. The ELDER OBSERVER, though serious, does grin a little. ASHER takes a breath, smooths his rumpled clothes, and sits.

INSTRUCTOR

I accept your apology, Asher. And I thank you for once again providing an opportunity for a lesson in language precision.

The INSTRUCTOR writes on a small tablet in his hand. The word "INSULTING" appears in the air in front of him in shimmering, large letters. It orbits around him so all can see.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

'Insulting' is too strong of a verb to characterize tardiness.

Another quick gesture on the tablet and the floating word "INSULTING" morphs into "INCONVENIENCING."

JONAS turns in his seat again, to look at the ELDER OBSERVER. This time, the ELDER OBSERVER is staring directly at him. JONAS quickly turns back around.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERSIDE LANE - AFTERNOON

JONAS and ASHER bike along a RIVER that leads to the FALLS. JONAS rides in a steady, straight line but ASHER is all over the place; he's weaving back and forth.

JONAS
Where were you?

ASHER
I wanted to make a last minute plea
to be assigned Assistant to the
School's Head of Recreation.

JONAS
You know it doesn't work like that.
They've been watching us since we
were-

ASHER
I know, but you can NEVER be too
careful.

They ride by a massive, gleaming **BRIDGE** which soars over the FALLS. Made from highly polished metal, its struts and arches slash out over the CHASM EDGE and into the sky.

The entrance to the bridge is barred, with a lone SECURITY GUARD attending the roadblock. The boys and the GUARD ignore one another, as though they don't even see each other.

ASHER (CONT'D)
You scared?

JONAS
Not scared. Wrong word. 'Excited?'
'Eager?'

ASHER
At least Fiona will get a new
brother tomorrow at the Naming
Ceremony.

The two stop riding and look down at the rushing river.

ASHER (CONT'D)
Poor Caleb.

JONAS stares down into the river at a swirling rapid. The water crashes violently against rocks.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - AFTERNOON

JONAS and ASHER slide their bicycles into ports outside the HOUSE OF THE OLD, a peaceful, serene building set within a stand of cypress trees, ringed with geraniums and tulips.

JONAS looks over at a building behind the HOUSE OF THE OLD - the ANNEX. It is round and almost windowless. His gaze lingers.

ASHER

(Whispering in a spooky voice.)

House of the Silent Elder. I think his beard is so long that it got all tangled and tied his mouth shut! Now c'mon!

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - CONTINUOUS

JONAS and ASHER dash up the steps and enter a gorgeous, marble lobby. At center, a FRIENDLY ATTENDANT looks up from her curved desk.

ATTENDANT

Jonas! Asher! Hurry - you can catch the end of Roberto's Release.

JONAS and ASHER hurry around the desk to the opposite side of the lobby. A HUGE window looks down thirty feet onto a Chamber.

In the Chamber are floating screens displaying the life of an old man, ROBERTO. It's hard to discern the writing on the screens from the above lobby, but JONAS can see many photographs and moving images of ROBERTO when he was young. When ROBERTO was JONAS'S age. When ROBERTO was a FATHER. When ROBERTO worked in FOOD DELIVERY. Nothing looks antiquated. The styles of clothing are identical and the backgrounds are the same as they are now.

An ELDER stands at a podium, giving a speech. In a chair beside the podium, sits ROBERTO. He looks proud and excited. Behind the ELDER and ROBERTO is an ENORMOUS STEEL DOOR.

In many chairs, some of them wheel chairs, are dozens of OLD MEN and WOMEN. Some are sleeping.

ASHER
(Whispering to JONAS.)
What do you think Elsewhere is
like?

JONAS
Elsewhere is wonderful.

The boys watch as down in the CHAMBER, the ELDER stands to the side and ROBERTO heaves himself to his feet. He smiles. He bows to the room of people. A CHANTING can be heard: ROBERTO, ROBERTO, ROBERTO, ROBERTO...

ASHER
How do you know?

JONAS
I guess...because everyone is so
excited...No. Everyone is so
'eager' to go there when it's time
for Release.

ROBERTO turns and, by himself, walks to the ENORMOUS STEEL DOOR. The DOOR slowly opens and the space is filled with blinding light.

ROBERTO enters the light.

A close-up of JONAS'S blue eyes as they observe. Then, a voice pierces the hypnotic ceremony -

ATTENDANT
All right, boys. It's your last day
of volunteering. End on a high
note, why don't you...

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD, BATHING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Under a translucent dome, the air is heavy with steam. Caretakers gently bathe elderly folk in dozens of large, spotless tubs. JONAS, in a smock, walks up to an OLD WOMAN reclining on a lounge chair. He reads her robe's nametag.

JONAS
Hello, Larissa. I'm Jonas.

He helps LARISSA up and walks her to a nearby tub. He pushes a button and warm water flows in from many small openings.

At a counter, bored, ASHER folds towels. Near him, an ELDER OBSERVER sits taking notes. ASHER looks nervously at the ELDER OBSERVER.

Several tubs down, FIONA is bathing an OLD MAN. The two are having an animated conversation. The OLD MAN laughs. JONAS smiles.

We stay on JONAS as LARISSA removes her robe and gets in the tub. Once in the soapy water, she leans back, closes her eyes, and sighs with pleasure. JONAS begins to carefully brush her white hair. Suddenly -

LARISSA
The Ceremony of the Grown is
tomorrow, isn't it?

JONAS
Oh. Yes.

LARISSA
What do you hope for?

JONAS looks over at FIONA and is struck speechless. *Her hair seems to blur in the same way the apple did - almost like a 'red' flame.* JONAS drops the hairbrush into the tub.

LARISSA (CONT'D)
Oooooop!

JONAS
I'm sorry!

LARISSA
I accept your apology. And...

LARISSA fishes around and her hand pops out of the tub, holding the brush.

LARISSA (CONT'D)
(Grinning.)
A-ha!

EXT. JONAS' HOUSE - EVENING

The U-shaped dwelling houses three FAMILY UNITS. A fountain flows in the middle of the courtyard.

INT. JONAS' 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 mash-up of Scandinavian and Shaker.

A shot of the front door. A slot, almost like one for mail, slides to the side and tray after tray are pushed through it. FATHER, kneeling, receives them, one by one.

MOTHER, JONAS, and LILY, sit at the dining room table. MOTHER is a short-haired, sharp-looking woman dressed in a dignified suit. LILY is fidgety and high-spirited. FATHER, cheerful and warm, comes in with the stack of trays.

FATHER

Evening meal has been delivered.

He puts the trays on the table. MOTHER distributes them. The trays appear to be made from a material which resembles fine, ornate china. The family members each snap the utensils from the slots in the tray. Activated in this fashion, the food immediately begins to SIZZLE AND STEAM under semi-opaque covers. When the covers are peeled back, healthy, fresh, vegetarian meals are revealed.

LILY

I'm starving.

MOTHER

Lily, that is such imprecise language. You are not 'starving,' you are 'hungry.' No one in the community is starving, has ever been starving or will ever be starving. So when you say you're starving -- you speak a *lie*--

LILY

And we don't lie. I apologize for my word choice.

Smiles all around the table.

MOTHER

(Warmly.)

We accept your apology.

The family starts eating. They enjoy their food in silence for a time, until FATHER puts down his fork.

FATHER

Who wants to be first for Feelings?
Anybody? Jonas?

JONAS notices how much LILY wants to go first.

JONAS

Lily can go first.

LILY gives him a big, grateful grin.

LILY

Well, tomorrow at the Ceremony of the Grown, I turn from a Sapling to a Maple. And I Feel...

(Searching for the right word.)

I Feel *nervous* because when you turn into a Maple, you receive your bicycle.

FATHER

And why is your Feeling nervousness?

LILY

'Cause what if I don't know how to balance and all the other Maples do?

MOTHER and FATHER smile at one another.

MOTHER

Lily, we have *seen* Jonas teaching you at night on his bicycle-

LILY

But...but it's against the rules for an Oak to teach a Sapling how to...

LILY worries that she'll be in trouble, but MOTHER and FATHER laugh. JONAS does too.

LILY (CONT'D)

OK! FINE! But I STILL Feel *nervous*.

FATHER

(Clearing his throat.)

I had a Feeling of *Concern* today. There's a newchild at the Center--

MOTHER

What gender is it?

FATHER

A sweet little *male*. With a lovely disposition. But he isn't growing fast enough and he doesn't sleep soundly. The Committee's beginning to talk about releasing him...

MOTHER

Already? That's a shame.

JONAS

Perhaps it's better for him to be released anyway.

FATHER

He's labeled "Uncertain" for now.

LILY

What's his name?

FATHER

Well he's not official yet, and I feel a bit guilty about this -- but I snuck a peek at tomorrow's Naming List... His name is Gabriel.

JONAS

You broke a rule?

FATHER

I whisper it to him when no one is near. I just...I thought it might enhance his nurturing. To have a name.

LILY

Gabriel. I like that name.

FATHER

I call him Gabe.

MOTHER sighs.

MOTHER

Well, my day Adjudicating the Elders was 'Frustrating.'

FATHER

(Having heard this one before...)

Tell us your Feelings, Mother.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERSIDE LANE - NIGHT

It's nighttime. There are no stars overhead, but there is a stillness that has settled on the community. It is December and there is no such thing as Christmas, snow, or colored lights, but it feels as though a momentous day lay ahead...

JONAS and ASHER stand before the SECURITY GUARD at the lip of the BRIDGE. The dark water surges below.

ASHER

C'mon! Tomorrow is the Ceremony of the GROAAAAAN. That means I become an ADULT. And if I'm an Adult and I try to break onto that bridge, I'll be Released to Elsewhere for sure-

JONAS

(Laughing.)

Ash! Leave him alone-

ASHER

BUUUT if you let us on TONIGHT, the worst that happens is a stiff smack from the Discipline Wand before the Ceremony. So whaddaya say? Let us go half-way! Whaddaya say?

The SECURITY GUARD doesn't budge or respond.

ASHER (CONT'D)

Oh he's good.

JONAS

Let's GO. Who cares what Elsewhere is like anyway. I mean, look at that place-

JONAS points through a grassy field and at The Community. Soft light illuminates the brick paths, tumbling fountains, and quiet homes. The Perfect Place. A smile falls across ASHER's lips.

ASHER

It is beautiful, huh?

EXT. BRICK PATH BEHIND THE HOUSE OF THE OLD - NIGHT

JONAS and ASHER walk along a path, headed back to their homes. They pass by the back of the HOUSE OF THE OLD and by the round, windowless ANNEX. ASHER notices JONAS is again staring at the ANNEX.

ASHER

Never goes in and never comes out...

ASHER pops along the path ahead of JONAS. A sharp sound.

JONAS stops. He turns, looking back at the round ANNEX.

Nothing.

EXT. BETWEEN LINES OF HOUSES - NIGHT

Suddenly, ASHER puts an arm out, stopping JONAS.

EXT. THE TRIANGLE - CONTINUOUS

ASHER pulls JONAS through the wall of a fountain.

JONAS

(As the water hits him.)

Ahhhh!

ASHER laughs. They're both wet.

ASHER

Remember this Triangle? YOU found
it. Back when we were Saplings.

JONAS look around at the triangular space: One wall is a row of hedges, the next is the side of a home, and the third is the wall of the fountain and an ancient tree arches overhead creating privacy.

JONAS

The only place in The Community
where you can't be seen...

ASHER

A perfect place for a promise.
Whatever happens tomorrow...You'll
always be my best friend.

ASHER juts out his hand to shake. JONAS looks down at the hand. It is a special gesture. Aside from work situations, people don't touch.

JONAS grabs ASHER's hand. They shake and laugh. The camera pulls back slowly.

ASHER (CONT'D)

My best friend, even when you are
Assigned to be a Birth Mother.

JONAS

My bigger concern is how I'm gonna
hide that I'm SOAKING wet!

Laughter as the world fades to black.

BLACK.

CRASHING DRUMS AND POWERFUL, ELECTRIC CHURNING CHORDS

EXT. WATERFALL - EARLY MORNING

In jump cuts that accelerate, the camera rockets alongside the thrashing WATERFALL. For the first time, we can see that the WATERFALL comprises a kind of edge to The Community, the only thing puncturing this edge is the **BRIDGE** with stretches out into a dense fog, obscuring whatever lies beyond...

EXT. PATHS AND HOMES - EARLY EVENING

The Morning of the Ceremony of the Grown

FAMILY UNITS take to the paths. Doors open and children rush themselves - eager to ascend in the hierarchy of trees:
 - Cherries to Walnuts to Hickorys to Willows to Cottonwoods to Birches to Bonsais to Poplars to Sapling Cedars to Maples to Aspens to Elms to Pines to Oaks to Adults. Despite this hierarchy, there is only one type of tree in The Community.

Bicycle wheels glimmer, peddled at faster speeds. FATHERS and MOTHERS walk alongside their offspring, toward the central plaza. It is the exciting and joyous feeling of a parade, a procession, a coming-together.

EXT. CENTRAL PLAZA - DAY

Amid the throng, we see JONAS, LILY, FATHER, and MOTHER.

Black Jets, in formation, tear across the sky.

Rising from the CENTRAL PLAZA is THE ODEUM. It looks like a cross between an open-air Greek theatre and a futuristic auditorium -- a stunning, modern construction. Just like the bridge, its exterior is made from brightly polished metal. Gleaming spires reach to the sky.

Absolutely everyone in the community is here -- well-dressed people milling about, greeting each other, chatting, holding babies.

As they walk, MOTHER tries to fix LILY's hair ribbons, but she is too fidgety.

LILY
 I don't like ribbons.

FATHER

You only have to wear them a few hours more. Then, watch, you may even MISS them.

LILY

(Under her breath.)

I TRULY doubt that.

MOTHER

Hurry, our rows are being seated.

(re: LILY's hair)

Good enough, I guess.

INT. ODEUM - DAY

The ODEUM is filling up. Each age group of children sits together. In the very back, the OLD sit together in their own section, watched by CARETAKERS. JONAS, ASHER, and the rest of the OAKS have the seats in the very front row.

ASHER

What, they couldn't get us better seats?

PIERRE, a fellow OAK, turns and gives him a pointed look. ASHER apes the look, making JONAS laugh shyly. FIONA walks in the nearby aisle. She stops and calls out to JONAS from a distance.

FIONA

Hey, Jonas.

JONAS

(A bit uncomfortably.)

Hey, Fiona.

ASHER

Here...sit by us.

(Trying to create space.)

We'll *scrunch*. Wrong word. *Shift*.

Wrong word. *Allocate*. Wrong word.

Squeeze. Wrong word. *Compress*.

Wrong-

JONAS playfully shoves ASHER. FIONA points to another section.

FIONA

I have to go sit with my Family Unit for now. Newchild Ceremony.

A flash of recognition on their faces as they remember CALEB, the drowned younger brother of FIONA.

JONAS
Congratulations.

FIONA
(Smiling.)
Thank you.

In one section of the room, JONAS sees MOTHER sitting with the other Legal Officers. LILY sits with the SAPLING CEDARS.

INT. ODEUM - NAMING AND PLACEMENT - LATER

The camera pans up to reveal that the stage has a long line of NURTURERS, each holding a BABY. Young MOTHERS and FATHERS stand by, eager and excited to receive their children. JONAS'S FATHER is among them.

Floating in the air are the words: NAMING AND PLACEMENT CEREMONY. The CHIEF ELDER, a handsome, statuesque woman leads.

CHIEF ELDER
Bruno!

The Community begins to chant as a BABY is placed into the hands of a COUPLE.

THE COMMUNITY
Bruno...Bruno...Bruno...Bruno!!

From the front row, ASHER leans over to JONAS.

ASHER
(Mocking the name.)
Bruno?!

JONAS shoves back. The CHIEF ELDER retrieves a BABY GIRL.

CHIEF ELDER
Bertha!

THE COMMUNITY
Bertha...Bertha...Bertha!

ASHER starts to open his mouth-

JONAS
(Smiling.)
Don't.

The COUPLES with their NEWCHILDREN file off the stage. The floating words "NAMING AND PLACEMENT CEREMONY" fade into "MURMUR-OF-REPLACEMENT CEREMONY." The mood becomes somber.

CHIEF ELDER

Unfortunately, as you all know, early this year James, Beatrice and Fiona lost their son Caleb to The River. We were all there at The Ceremony of Loss, murmuring Caleb's name away. Thus, let us begin the Murmur-of-Replacement Ceremony with a newchild for this family unit.

She nods offstage and A COUPLE and FIONA approaches the podium, trembling with anticipation.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

James and Beatrice and Fiona, it is my honor to present you with precious... *Caleb!*

A huge burst of applause as a NURTURER steps forward and presents a stout, flailing baby boy to FIONA's PARENTS.

THE COMMUNITY

Caleb...Caleb...Caleb...Caleb!

FIONA smiles. Nothing seems at all the matter with this.

CUT TO:

EXT. ABOVE THE COMMUNITY - DAY

We are in the air above the community. The lanes are all deserted and it's eerily quiet. No wind, no birds -- SILENCE. We can see into the ODEUM, filled to the top.

INT. ODEUM - LATER

A very tight shot of the CHIEF ELDER's FACE. She is silent. She squints. She stares into the crowd. An ominous feeling. Then, suddenly - at the top of her lungs:

CHIEF ELDER

CEREMONY OF THE GROWN!

An uproarious cheer from THE COMMUNITY. On stage, an elaborate, holographic display "grows":

Holograms of leafless, 'mythical' trees, smallest to largest: Cherries to Walnuts to Hickorys to Willows to Cottonwoods to Birches to Bonsais to Poplars to Sapling Cedars to Maples to Aspens to Elms to Pines to Oaks.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Cherry Trees!

Small children file onto the stage. The CHERRY TREE hologram behind them fills with leaves. It's beautiful.

From the audience, JONAS looks over to a row of ELDERS seated on the side of the stage. One of the plush chairs is empty. A moment, lingering on JONAS'S face.

INT. ODEUM: CEREMONY OF THE GROWN MONTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Thumping drums under. The camera pans across lines of children as they fade to other lines of children, always getting progressively older. The bare trees corresponding to the ages of the children rise and fill with leaves.

CHIEF ELDER
Walnuts...Hickorys...Cottonwoods...

We can see that some ages have special objects associated with them. WALNUTS have their hair braided. HICKORYS are given buttoned clothing. COTTONWOODS are given pockets. The words "braids," "buttons," "pockets" are formed by the leaves of the holographic trees.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Birches...Bonsais...Poplars...
Sapling Cedars!

A team of PARENTS with SCISSORS AND CLIPPERS are cutting SAPLING CEDAR hair into more adult haircuts. Girls get their braids snipped off and have their hair put up in a tasteful ribbon. The boys lose most of their longish hair -- their ears are now showing.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Maples!

LILY's group all stand on a group of risers. When the class is seen shoulder to shoulder, the similarity in their haircuts is a little eerie. The girls are happily pulling the ribbons out of their hair. LILY is anxious to do this. Then-

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
...bicycles!

Glimmering BICYCLES rise from the floor in front of each of the children. The audience applauds.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Welcome...*Maples*.

Again, the audience applauds. The MAPLE tree hologram behind them fills with leaves. It's beautiful. LILY is so proud. JONAS smiles up at his sister. Then, his gaze wanders to the row of ELDERS and the previously empty plush chair.

It is now occupied by an OLD, BEARDED MAN with pale eyes. Where did he come from? JONAS stares. Then, slowly, the BEARDED MAN turns his head and looks directly at JONAS. JONAS'S eyes go wide and he looks away.

The montage climaxes with the CHIEF ELDER proclaiming:

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
The Ceremony of the Grown!

INT. ODEUM AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

ASHER, JONAS, FIONA, and other OAKS rise from their seats. They look terrified.

ASHER
(Shaking his head.)
Why didn't I follow the rules?
Jonas, you have to help me. I'm
DOOMED. Help me, Jonas! Joonasss!

As they file, JONAS smiles a little, but he's not in the mood for jokes. He's terrified too.

CUT TO:

INT. ODEUM STAGE: THE CEREMONY OF THE GROWN - CONTINUOUS

The camera pans behind the row of nervous OAKS, looking out to the enormous audience.

FATHER sits with MOTHER. They smile a worried smile.

Even LILY, in another section with the MAPLES, looks a bit apprehensive, twisting her old hair ribbon around her finger.

ONSTAGE, The CHIEF ELDER speaks to THE COMMUNITY. Her voice resonates throughout the ODEUM.

CHIEF ELDER

After becoming an Adult, age isn't important. Most of us even lose track of how old we are as time passes. What's important is the preparation for adult life, and the training you receive in your Assignment.

(Turns to the OAKS.)

This is the time we acknowledge *differences*. All your training so far has been toward helping you fit in, and curb any impulse that may set you apart from others, but today we *honor* your differences. They have determined your future.

ON THE RISERS, FIONA whispers to JONAS.

FIONA

Good luck.

JONAS

You too.

CHIEF ELDER

Here you see the Scientists and Leaders, the Workers and Birthmothers of the future.

(Big smile.)

I think we're in good hands.

(Pause for effect)

Madeline.

The first new ADULT in the first row, MADELINE, reacts as if she is to be Released. Wide-eyed and trembling, she approaches the podium.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

Madeline: Food Distribution Manager. Thank you for your childhood.

Applause. An ELDER presents her with what looks like a PIECE OF FOLDED GLASS, then ushers her offstage.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

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 her FOLDED GLASS and a handshake.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Isaac: Instructor of Cottonwoods.
Thank you for your childhood.

ISAAC, an affable intelligent-looking kid walks over to the podium, where he gets his FOLDED GLASS and handshake.

ASHER turns to JONAS and raises his brows, baring his teeth as if to say, "Here we go..."

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Asher.
(Pause for laugh.)
All of us know and enjoy Asher.

More laughter. ASHER winks at the audience. A bigger laugh.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
You might remember what Asher used to be like. Unruly, willful, careless. Certainly no stranger to the Punishment Wand. Thank goodness age and a little discipline put a stop to all that. *Mostly...*
(Laughter.)
The Committee took quite a while to decide what Assignment might be appropriate for a boy of such... *specific* talents.
(More laughter.)
Sometimes those IN NEED of responsibility learn it best when they are the practitioners OF IT.

A shot of ASHER's eyes going wide.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
So I am pleased to assign Asher:
Pilot.

Delighted gasps and applause from the crowd. *This is a great Assignment.* ASHER is grinning as he walks to the podium, one of his shoelaces flopping free. He gets FOLDED GLASS.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Thank you for your childhood.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ODEUM - LATER

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

CHIEF ELDER

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

JONAS smiles and breaks out in applause; FIONA reacts with
delight. She climbs down the risers, trembling with joy and
relief. She gets her folded GLASS and handshake, and waves to
her family, who holds the 'new' CALEB.

JONAS is next in line. He breathes hard. He stiffens and
tries to put on a brave face. His MOTHER bites her lip. The
CHIEF ELDER looks at her list.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

Pierre.

PIERRE looks startled, but not as startled as JONAS.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

Civic Officer. Thank you for your
childhood.

PIERRE glances at JONAS, confused, then walks over to the
podium to get his FOLDED GLASS. JONAS looks around,
petrified.

They skipped him. This has never happened.

In the crowd, MOTHER and FATHER look terribly concerned. In
her MAPLE section, LILY swivels in her seat, her eyes
searching for her parents. Finding them, she shoots them a
HORRIFIED LOOK and whispers.

LILY

They skipped Jonas!

A ripple of confusion spreads through the crowd.

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ODEUM - LATER

And now, we are near the end of the Ceremony. JONAS is alone
onstage as the CHIEF ELDER presents MARTIN with his
assignment.

CHIEF ELDER

Farmer. Thank you for your
childhood.

MARTIN, a large, unremarkable boy with a kind face, turns to look at JONAS, then back at the CHIEF ELDER. He crosses to get his FOLDED GLASS and HANDSHAKE to scattered, unenthusiastic applause. JONAS automatically claps.

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 (CONT'D)

(To the audience.)

I know that you are all concerned.
That you feel I have made a
mistake. I have caused you Anxiety.
I apologize to my community --

AUDIENCE

We accept your apology.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

Jonas, I apologize to you in
particular. I have caused you
Anguish.

JONAS

(Almost inaudibly.)

I accept...your apology.

CHIEF ELDER

Please step forward now.

JONAS walks to the podium as though it were a guillotine. The

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

Jonas has not been assigned.

ON JONAS: His heart sinks at these words.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

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

An astonished GASP from the audience. The eyes of adults widen in awe. JONAS stands frozen, still uncomprehending. MOTHER and FATHER exchange a stunned look.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)

Such a selection is very rare. Our
community has only one Receiver. It
is he who trains his successor.

She gestures to a gallery where the Committee of Elders sits. JONAS follows her gesture to the BEARDED ELDER with pale eyes. He watches JONAS intently.

The ELDER's face is unreadable; he seems neither pleased nor displeased with the announcement. Rather, he seems vaguely displeased with everything in the universe.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
We have not been hasty *this time*.
We couldn't afford another failure.
I won't dwell on it because it
causes us all terrible discomfort--

The audience shifts uneasily in their seats.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
We have watched Jonas very
carefully, for many years, and we
have determined that he has all
four of the attributes a Receiver
must have. Intelligence, Integrity,
Courage...

JONAS looks completely lost.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
(Turning to JONAS.)
Jonas, the training required of you
involves pain. Physical pain. Yes,
we have all scraped our knees in
the occasional fall from the
bicycle and the pills have
mitigated that discomfort.
But...But you will be faced now
with pain of a magnitude that none
of us here can comprehend. Because
it beyond our experience.

These words almost make JONAS faint. He looks out over the audience. Their faces, up until now pale, FLASH PINK FOR AN INSTANT. The room blurs. The CHIEF ELDER's words slow and become distorted. Then, SUDDENLY, the illusion is gone.

CHIEF ELDER (CONT'D)
Finally, the fourth attribute. It
is one that I can name but not
describe. I do not understand it.
You members of the community will
not understand it either. The
current Receiver has told us that
Jonas has this quality. He calls it
- *The Capacity to See Beyond*.

The crowd is hushed. The CHIEF ELDER turns to JONAS as though prompting him to confirm this. JONAS clears his throat.

JONAS
I...I don't think that-

CHIEF ELDER
(Turning immediately
back.)
You will be trained as our next
Receiver of Memory.

The COMMUNITY begins to chant as JONAS slowly walks forward
to the CHIEF ELDER who hands him his FOLDED GLASS.

THE COMMUNITY
(Louder and faster.)
Jonas. Jonas. JONAS. JONAS! JONAS!!

CHIEF ELDER
(Quietly, to JONAS. An
almost sternness in her
gaze.)
We thank you for your childhood.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

SNAP UP on JONAS, MOTHER, FATHER and LILY at the table. The
meal has concluded. There is quiet, uncomfortable tension.
LILY looks around at all the faces, tries not to say
anything. But she can't help herself.

LILY
Do we have to do what Jonas says
now?

MOTHER
Lily, please! Jonas has been
greatly honored.
(To JONAS.)
Your father and I are... very
proud.

FATHER
Important job, very important...

Quiet. Awkwardness fills the air.

FATHER (CONT'D)
You...you'd better get some rest.
You don't want to be tired for your
first day.

EXT. THE COMMUNITY - NIGHT

An aerial shot of THE COMMUNITY at rest.

Then, it begins to telescope in, increasing in speed.

It lands on the HOUSE OF THE OLD, from above.

INT. BATHING ROOM, HOUSE OF THE OLD - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Dripping water echoes in the now empty bathing room.

A single tub stands in the middle of the tiled floor. A shaft of moonlight illuminates the steam rising from the surface of the water.

FIONA is in the water, naked, but covered by the steam. Her wet hair falls onto her shoulders.

JONAS is suddenly standing mere feet away.

FIONA RISES, water SLOSHING with a deafening sound, and holds out her wet hand to JONAS, reaching for him.

FIONA
The Receiver of Memory...

JONAS takes a step towards FIONA.

An electronic tone begins to sound. It grows louder.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A clean, modern room. JONAS lies in bed. His eyes crack open.

The electric tone is coming from downstairs. JONAS sits up, swinging his legs over the edge of the bed.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY OF JONAS'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

The tone is a doorbell. FATHER reaches for the knob. JONAS comes down the stairs, seeing that MOTHER is already halfway down, perturbed by this interruption. The door opens.

DINAH, a harried and exasperated young female NURTURER, a co-worker of his is holding a smoky-plastic baby-carrier. An infant HOWL emits from the carrier.

FATHER

Dinah.

DINAH

Hi, I'm sorry to bother you so late, but he's really been unacceptable tonight; I'm at wits' end and you said--

FATHER

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

MOTHER

(Surprised.)

You'll what?

DINAH

I apologize.

FATHER

I accept your apology. Thanks.

FATHER takes the carrier and closes the door. PIERCING HOWLS continue from inside the carrier. FATHER smiles sheepishly to MOTHER, who gives him a steely look.

FATHER (CONT'D)

This is Gabriel. The infant I-

MOTHER

I remember. But why is he here?

LILY appears from upstairs and shoots down the stairs.

LILY

Look at him! He's sooooo-

MOTHER

He's not staying here. The noise that child is - Jonas starts his training TOMORROW and-

FATHER

If he doesn't learn to control his emotions, he'll be released.

A shot of MOTHER pursing her lips.

LILY

I think we're all in agreement that Gabriel sleeps in my room.

INT. LILY'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

The baby-carrier has legs that transform it into a bassinet. MOTHER, FATHER, LILY, and JONAS crowd around. We do not yet see GABRIEL. The howling continues.

MOTHER

He's SO loud. I've never heard anything like it.

FATHER

Lily, get your Comfort Object.

LILY

But it's MINE.

FATHER

You're a Maple now. You are not to sleep with the Comfort Object and perhaps it will help.

LILY grumbles and fetches a stuffed elephant. Rolling her eyes, she tosses it into the bassinet.

JONAS

Careful.

FATHER gets down on his knees, leaning into the bassinet. We now see GABRIEL. He is absolutely tiny - smaller than a regular newborn. He writhes, upset.

FATHER

(Holding the stuffed elephant to GABRIEL.)

This is called a Hippo.

It is clearly an *elephant*, but they do not know this.

FATHER (CONT'D)

The Hippo is a mythical creature. It will protect you and help you sleep.

More crying. JONAS takes a step forward and sees GABRIEL for the first time. SUDDENLY, something strange happens.

For an INSTANT, GABRIEL's eyes BECOME a bright SATURATED BLUE. Bluer than anything JONAS has ever seen. Bluer than even his own eyes. JONAS, startled, looks around at his FAMILY UNIT. Even though they are looking right at GABRIEL, they have not noticed.

JONAS

Did you see that?

FATHER

What?

MOTHER

Can we all try to sleep, please?

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JONAS lies in bed, his eyes open, thinking. He can hear GABRIEL crying down the hall. It is hard to sleep, both with the howling and with the anticipation for the morning that courses through his veins. JONAS gets out of bed and walks to a bureau. The FOLDED GLASS sits, heretofore, untouched. JONAS takes a breath and UNFOLDS the GLASS. Like what would be paper, if paper existed, the GLASS page unfolds.

Through the GLASS, words begin to appear: JONAS - RECEIVER OF MEMORY. Then, Five Rules fade up in the glass.

JONAS

One: Every day, report directly to the Receiver of Memory for your training. After training, go immediately to your dwelling.
Two: From this moment, you are exempted from all rules governing rudeness. You may ask any question.

JONAS peers out the window, wondering what it means.

JONAS (CONT'D)

Three: You may not discuss your training with anyone, ever. That includes Parents and the Elders.
Four: You must stop taking your medication immediately.

JONAS looks up again. What is he getting into? He looks back at the GLASS. We MOVE into CLOSE-UP of the final rule, as we hear JONAS'S voice whisper...

JONAS (CONT'D)

Five: YOU MAY LIE.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Darkness. Through large bay windows on either side, light begins to fill the room, coming from *both* windows...not just from the East... The whole process of illumination takes about 12 seconds and is clearly not time-lapse. This is how morning breaks.

EXT. JONAS'S HOUSE - MORNING

LILY wheels her bicycle to the front path. She smiles, so excited to OFFICIALLY take it for a ride. FATHER stands by, holding the squirming GABRIEL. He whimpers. MOTHER is beside JONAS.

MOTHER

It was...a desire?

JONAS

I wanted her to take her clothes off. And I wanted to get into the tub. Maybe to...to bathe her... I guess? I feel slightly embarrassed, though I don't know why. The *wanting*. I knew that I shouldn't. But I still *wanted* it so terribly. I almost... It hurt in a strange way. Am I okay?

MOTHER turns to FATHER, giving him a knowing look.

MOTHER

And you've been taking your Pill?

JONAS

For pain?

MOTHER

There is a different kind of pain, I've been told. They are called Stirrings. The Pills are supposed to take care of it, but-

FATHER

Do you suppose Jonas had Stirrings because he has, what did the Elder call it? "The capacity to see-"

MOTHER

(Cutting him off.)

Here.

MOTHER produces a glass-enclosed Pill.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Take an extra. I'll inquire about getting you a stronger dosage.

JONAS receives the Pill, hesitantly. He remembers that he is to halt the medication...

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - A BIT LATER

JONAS and FIONA walk their bikes toward the HOUSE OF THE OLD.

FIONA

I don't know why I'm so nervous.
I've volunteered here so much.

JONAS

You are meant to be here. The
Elders are never wrong.

FIONA

So that means they're not wrong
about you, huh?

JONAS stops. He doesn't know what to say. A stream, sourced from one of the fountains, flows across the Lane. A small wooden bridge leads to the entrance to the HOUSE OF THE OLD. On the footbridge, FIONA picks up a handful of flat stones and tosses one into the river.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Well, I'm still nervous.

She hands a stone to JONAS. JONAS takes the stone and, without her seeing, switches the stone in his pocket for the glass-enclosed Pill. When FIONA tosses in another stone, JONAS throws his Pill into the stream. It floats away, unnoticed by FIONA.

FIONA (CONT'D)

I guess...here goes nothing. Good
luck, Jonas. I can't wait to hear
about your training.

JONAS

(Knowing he can't tell
her.)
Me too.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD, ANNEX - MOMENTS LATER

JONAS wheels his bike around back. THE ANNEX IS ROUND -- an almost windowless structure. There is a plain, unmarked metal door tucked away in a shadowy alcove. He parks his bike in the single, bike port. He looks at the door with some trepidation. There is no handle. But there is A BUTTON AND A SPEAKER next to it. He pushes the button. The speaker crackles to life. He hears the female ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT (ON SPEAKER)

Yes?

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

ATTENDANT (ON SPEAKER)
Yes, Jonas. Could you please put
your hand on the sensor area? Just
to the left of the speaker.

JONAS tentatively does so. The door clicks and opens.

He enters..

INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A small, clean anteroom. Across the room, a set of steps lead to another metal door almost near the ceiling. The ATTENDANT, an older woman, looks up from her desk. Then to JONAS'S great surprise, she stands.

ATTENDANT
(Respectfully.)
Welcome, Receiver of Memory.

JONAS
Please, I'm just Jonas.

She smiles and indicates for him to go into the INNER DOOR. JONAS walks up the steps and gestures to the closed metal door questioningly.

JONAS (CONT'D)
The, the doors, they--

ATTENDANT
Oh. Those are called "locks."

JONAS
Locks.

ATTENDANT
They keep the doors shut. The
Receiver needs privacy for his
concentration. It would be
difficult if citizens wandered in,
looking for the Department of
Bicycle Repair, or something.

JONAS laughs, relaxing a little. The ATTENDANT points at the locked inner door.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)
There's a sensor there as well. It
will recognize you now. And always.

JONAS takes a deep breath and places his hand on the metal plate.

INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

JONAS walks into the RECEIVER's spacious living quarters. It is a large, ROUND ROOM. Steps spiral along the circular wall UP TO AND THROUGH AN OPENING IN THE CEILING. It is furnished very much like JONAS's family's dwelling -- purely functional, with a bed, desk, table and sofa -- but bigger; and the materials seem more PLUSH and LUXURIOUS. Intricately carved stained wooden frames, thick, dark, embroidered upholstery -- more ornate in comparison to the clean, light lines of the rest of the design in the community.

The biggest difference -- one that takes JONAS's breath away -- are THE BOOKS. Walls are lined with floor-to-ceiling BOOKCASES, THOUSANDS OF BOOKS, all sizes, all genuine antiques with leather bindings and gilt-lettered spines. Paper. JONAS is so surprised and shocked by the books that he doesn't see the RECEIVER, who sits at his desk, in the middle of all this, watching him intently.

RECEIVER

Books.

JONAS lets out a shriek. He didn't see the RECEIVER.

JONAS

(Hyperventilating.)

Hello, I'm...I'm...

RECEIVER

They're called "Books."

JONAS

I'm--

RECEIVER

I know who you are. Welcome,
Receiver of Memory.

JONAS

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

JONAS waits for The RECEIVER to accept his apology as is customary.

JONAS (CONT'D)

I...I apologize.

Nothing. A long protracted pause. Finally, JONAS takes a deep breath and stumbles on, desperately trying to fill the awkward silence. The RECEIVER just scrutinizes JONAS.

He sits in a chair and beckons JONAS to a chair beside him.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)

"I apologize for my lack of understanding" - do not apologize to me. Ever again. I don't like it. It doesn't MEAN anything. When you are here, I will do my job and you will do yours. Simply stated, although not really simple at all, my job is to transmit to you all the memories I have within me. Memories of the past.

JONAS

Thank you. I would be very interested to learn about your life.

The RECEIVER suddenly leans forward and speaks emphatically, his pale eyes ablaze. JONAS recoils from the intensity, not used to such raw emotion.

RECEIVER

(Barks.)

No. Not my life, you...NOT MY LIFE, Jonas. I'm talking about...You will learn the secret history of the world. Before you, before me. Before...*Generations* before. It all goes *backandbackandback*.

He makes a series of slashing gestures with his hand.

JONAS

(Completely baffled.)

I don't understand what you mean by "the whole world" or "generations before."

RECEIVER

Oh there's much more. There are more memories than words on every page of every book in this room. I received them from my predecessor when I was selected. And here I re-experience them again and again. It is how wisdom comes. With that wisdom, I advise the Elders, and we shape our future.

He closes his eyes and rests for a moment, out of breath.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)
I am so *weighted* with them. I'm
also not used to speaking of it at
all. All these years with no one to
share.

JONAS looks very concerned for The RECEIVER.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)
It's like...
(A wry smile on his face
as this comes to him.)
It's like going downhill through
deep snow on a sled. At first it's
the speed, the exhilaration, then
snow accumulates on the runners,
you slow down, and have to push--
(Peers at JONAS.)
This means nothing to you, does it?

JONAS shakes his head.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)
You don't know what *snow* is, do
you? Or a *sled*? Or *downhill*.. This
term means nothing to you.

JONAS wishes he could say he understood. But he doesn't.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)
Well, that's as good a place to
start as any--

The RECEIVER stands, and crosses to the ubiquitous SPEAKER on
the wall. He flicks a switch: its glowing eye dims, and the
constant announcements abruptly fall silent.

JONAS gasps, astonished at this power.

JONAS
Nobody has a switch.

RECEIVER
You will. But not where it matters.
You won't be able to turn the
memories off.

Then, The RECEIVER takes both of his hands and beings to rub
his palms on his pants, as though removing any sweat.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)

There is no way to prepare you for what I'm going to do to now. You'll have to trust me. Close your eyes.

(Rolls up his sleeves.)

Your hands, please.

JONAS

What?

RECEIVER

This will go faster if you don't waste our time.

JONAS sticks out his hands.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)

Palms up. Now I warn you, my hands are cold. Of course, "Cold," that means nothing to you.

JONAS

You're going to touch me? No one touches anyone, except when they are Infants or when you help the Old to clean themselves and-

The RECEIVER suddenly grabs JONAS's wrists, the RECEIVER's thumbs falling on the veins at the base of JONAS'S palms. As soon as he does, a SHOCK TRAVELS THROUGH JONAS'S BODY, as if an electric current runs through him. And as JONAS BLINKS RAPIDLY, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY - MEMORY

JONAS stands, alone, in his shirtsleeves, atop a snow-covered hill in the middle of a dense wood. Snow-laden branches shimmer in the crisp winter light. It's silent and beautiful.

Large snowflakes slowly fall on JONAS, sparkling in his dark hair. He takes a deep BREATH, EXHALES, marveling at the steam in the frigid air.

His feet are sunk deep in the snow, and in one of his bare hands, he's holding a rough, ice-encrusted ROPE. Attached to the rope is a 'RED' SLED, Classic Flyer, pointed downhill.

In the blank ('white') expanse, there are no other colors except the 'RED' of the sled.

He carefully sits on the sled and clutches the rope tighter. The sled BEGINS TO MOVE. Slowly at first, then picking up speed. The runners cut clear lines as the sled runs swiftly down the hill -- trees whip past at terrific speed. The wind stings JONAS'S face as he PLUNGES through a whirling torrent of snow crystals. He shuts his eyes tightly against the wind and snow, scared, but an exhilarated type of fear.

Finally, the sled begins to SLOW as the hill flattens and it hits a small bump. JONAS pops off and into the snow, belly up. All is silent again. JONAS lies there for a moment, catching his breath, then opens his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. RECEIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - LATE AFTERNOON

JONAS'S eyes SNAP OPEN. The RECEIVER has released JONAS'S hands, and now he slumps in the chair looking drained, yet somehow a little unburdened by transmission of the memory.

JONAS

Was I-

RECEIVER

You were asleep. That will change as you get used to this.

JONAS

What time is it?

RECEIVER

What did you think of the sled.

JONAS brightens, his eyes shining in the now-darkening room.

JONAS

The sled...it was -

RECEIVER

That's called "Red."

JONAS

That...thing-

RECEIVER

"Red."

JONAS

Yeah, it looks like...an apple. But it also *doesn't*. Or...it's sort of like the hair of a girl I-

RECEIVER

Don't worry about that yet.

JONAS

And...and why don't we have *snow*,
and *sleds*, and *hills*? And when did
we in the past? Did my Parents? Did
you?

RECEIVER

No, it's a very distant memory.
There's no snow because of climate
control. It made growing crops
inefficient and transportation
difficult. Hills -- same thing, not
practical. As for sleds? No hills,
no snow -- no sleds. All that went
away when we adopted Sameness.

JONAS

Sameness...

RECEIVER

(Wearily.)

You receive well. I feel lighter
now... a little.

JONAS

You mean you don't have the memory
of it anymore? I took it from you?

RECEIVER

It's yours now.

JONAS takes this in. THE RECEIVER stands and begins to walk

RECEIVER (CONT'D)

I haven't..

JONAS closes his eyes as if to receive another memory.

RECEIVER (CONT'D)

(Annoyed. He stands and
begins to walk away.)

A *real* walk, Jonas.

JONAS opens his eyes and scrambles to his feet.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - EVENING

JONAS and THE RECEIVER walk along a path that cuts through
the community. JONAS wheels his bike.

The glowing globes on posts TURN ON with the onset of darkness, bathing the lanes in soft light. JONAS himself glows with excitement, but THE RECEIVER is weary.

JONAS

And it was FUN. More than racing bicycles. It was—

RECEIVER

There was plenty about life in the past that was not fun. But this is a good start for today. Have to start slow... For both of our sakes.

JONAS

(Stops.)

You've given memories to someone else? Is that what the Chief Elder was talking about? "We can't afford another failure—"

The RECEIVER walks on in silence. JONAS stands there for a moment, then hurries to catch up.

JONAS (CONT'D)

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

RECEIVER

(Wry smile.)

Mm. Good question. 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 moment. Then, a wry grin.)

You will be very good at this job.

JONAS smiles, pleased with the RECEIVER's approval.

JONAS

Thank you for my first day. I can't wait to tell--

The RECEIVER stops JONAS cold. The grin is gone.

RECEIVER

No. You may never discuss your training. Ever.

JONAS

But...why? What's so dangerous about telling people about a *sled*?

RECEIVER

Till tomorrow, Jonas.

The RECEIVER begins to walk away, a hobble in his step. JONAS watches a moment. Then, calls out-

JONAS

One more question!

The RECEIVER stops. He doesn't turn around.

JONAS (CONT'D)

If I'm now The Receiver, well, then what does that make you?

RECEIVER

(Thinks, then, smiles to himself.)

Then...I must be The Giver.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPINGROOM - NIGHT

We're above JONAS'S bed. We hear GABRIEL howling down the hall, but JONAS is exhausted and he's sleeping, having kicked the bed covers off. MOVE into JONAS'S sleeping face. His eyes are moving behind the closed eyelids.

SMASH CUT TO:

JONAS'S DREAM:

He is back on the sled, HURTLING down the snowy hill. This time, JONAS's eyes are WIDE OPEN, despite the stinging wind. He YELLS out with unrestrained joy. At the bottom of the hill, we see, by his new tracks, that he has passed the point where his previous tracks ended. He has gone further.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS' SLEEPINGROOM - MORNING

JONAS wakes up in the ordinary light of his bedroom. As he sits up on the bed, he looks out his window.

The flat, colorless Community goes about its routine. He'll never see it as it was again.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - MORNING

Breakfast. MOTHER, FATHER, JONAS, and fussy GABRIEL.

MOTHER
You went right to sleep.

JONAS
...I was very tired.

FATHER
(Of GABRIEL.)
Wish this one could be.

INT. LILY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

LILY brushes her hair, listening to the conversation downstairs.

MOTHER (O.S.)
So, what was it like?

JONAS (O.S.)
I'm...I'm worried I'll be late.
Excuse me.

Sound of a chair pushing back.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Wait a minute. Tell us SOMETHING.
What is the inside of the building
like?

FATHER (O.S.)
Let him alone - he said he's in a
hurry.

LILY walks to the bassinet and picks up her old COMFORT
OBJECT, the "HIPPO."

MOTHER (O.S.)
Here are new Pills for you. Take 2
a day. And they are a stronger
dosage.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A close-up of JONAS's face.

JONAS

Yes, Mother. I will take them right away.

His first lie.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - DAY

JONAS launches his pills in the air and they land in the river. FIONA throws a stone. They linger on their bikes.

FIONA

You know, I looked for you yesterday, so we could ride home together. Then I waited by your bike, but you were still in there. So how was your first day at--

JONAS

I apologize for making you wait.

FIONA

I accept your apology.

They ride on in silence. FIONA politely waits for JONAS to tell her about his first day of training.

FIONA (CONT'D)

Well! What is The Receiver *like*? I don't know anyone who's ever talked to him.

JONAS

I'm the Receiver, remember? So tell me...what am I like?

FIONA laughs, but not only has JONAS obfuscated, he is sort of...flirting.

JONAS (CONT'D)

I mean, do you like me?

VOICE

STOP THAT RIGHT NOW!

JONAS runs his bicycle aground at the shock. He looks up and sees:

ASHER. ASHER is dressed all in BLACK. He has a helmet and gloves. A sort of storm trooper, Pilot-In-Training.

ASHER

Do you know the jets basically fly themselves? Automatic. That Pilot you and me saw kinda hovering overhead put the plane into *manual control*. How weird is that? They said he misread his nav-controls, I think he got confused or was irresponsible or-

JONAS

Or was trying to escape.

ASHER smiles at JONAS, but it's suspicious. FIONA breaks the silence.

FIONA

Amazing: Of all people *Asher* is talking about being *responsible*. I guess that means Assignments are never wrong. And my first day was great. I learned so much new-

ASHER

How 'bout you, Jonas? What was it like? What goes on in that weird circle-building?

JONAS

I can honestly tell you, Asher...what I learned yesterday... put me to sleep.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

The door clicks open and JONAS enters. THE GIVER is sitting at his desk, a BOOK open in front of him.

GIVER

Come see this--

He turns the book so JONAS can see. On the page is a beautiful woodcut illustration: dramatic storm clouds loom over a violent sea. Shipwreck survivors cling to a hastily made raft in the huge waves.

Far in the distance, slicing through the clouds and down to the water, is a RAINBOW.

GIVER (CONT'D)

Do you see it? That arc in the sky.
That is what people called a
Rainbow. Used to be a symbol of
hope.

JONAS

The shape is nice.

JONAS'S POV: The illustration is almost completely colorless.

GIVER

The *SHAPE*? Oh, Jonas, you have no
idea...

THE GIVER reaches for JONAS's wrists...

CUT TO:

EXT. STORMY SEA - DAY - MEMORY

JONAS holds on with all his strength as the raft SMASHES down into the trough of a huge wave. A torrent of salty water is forced through the gaps in the raft and soaks JONAS to the bone, almost drowning him. He reacts to the taste of the water, choking. The next wave picks up the raft and raises it to the sky. As the raft crests the wave, JONAS opens his eyes, blinking away the water, and is STUNNED to see the most beautiful, INTENSELY COLORED RAINBOW. It cuts through the sky in the distance, just as in the painting in the book, but VIVID with color. VERY CLOSE on JONAS'S eyes, filled with wonder, SHIMMERING DROPLETS OF WATER BEADED ON HIS EYELASHES. His eyes are as INTENSELY BLUE as...

CUT TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

...THE GIVER's eyes. Which JONAS sees, as his eyes open slowly. He looks at THE GIVER, who silently points to the open book. JONAS leans over the page and sees the rainbow, now in full color...the green tint of the waves...and the clouds, tinged with leaden blue...

JONAS smiles.

NOTE: From now on, the film will be seen in full vivid color.

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, ROOF - DUSK

JONAS and THE GIVER stand on the roof, looking over The Community. The sky turns purple with the onset of the dark.

JONAS

Why can't everyone see color?

GIVER

Our people made that choice.
Backandbackandback. To do away with
differences. In one of the books I
found the sentence: "The grass is
always greener on the other side."

JONAS

"On the other side?"

GIVER

It means Jealousy. It was smarter
to embrace Sameness. That way, no
one would feel envy. Do you think
that's wise, Jonas?

THE GIVER looks at JONAS. This is a test, but there is
nothing on THE GIVER's face to betray this.

JONAS

I...I think so.

THE GIVER takes in a breath. He looks away, disappointed.

JONAS (CONT'D)

(To the purple sky.)

But... it's so -- so beautiful. I
feel...almost an aching inside to
KNOW.

GIVER

You've stopped all medication?

JONAS

(Nodding.)

Yes and I want more memories. I
want to experience *everything*.

THE GIVER watches him with a trace of nostalgia. It is the
first time THE GIVER seems outright kind. JONAS sees THE
GIVER watching him and smiles.

JONAS (CONT'D)

What?

GIVER
You remind me of someone from long ago.

JONAS
You?

GIVER
YOU are NOT me.

JONAS blinks, surprised at the curtness.

JONAS
Well, if not you, then, you mean the last Receiver-in-Training? What exactly-

THE GIVER casts a quick, appraising look at JONAS.

GIVER (CONT'D)
I want to show you something.
Something very precious to me.

CUT TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

THE GIVER puts his hand on a metal panel on the wall, and suddenly, a part of the wall under the spiral stairs becomes AN OPENING. Beyond it, A SLOPING TUNNEL curves down into the darkness. THE GIVER motions JONAS to follow him. They descend into the gloom and enter into a CAVERNOUS ROUND ROOM.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, UNDERGROUND CHAMBER -
CONTINUOUS

THE GIVER touches the wall, and HUNDREDS OF HOLOGRAPHIC CANDLES blaze to life. They encircle the room and bathe it in WARM, FLICKERING LIGHT. A beautiful, closed GRAND PIANO stands in the middle of an otherwise empty, large room.

GIVER
They called this object a *Piano*...

JONAS
Is it a kind of table?

GIVER (CONT'D)
I saw it in memories. Many, many memories. But there was nothing like it in our Community.

(MORE)

GIVER (CONT'D)

I had given up hope of ever seeing one in real life when, one day, The Receiver before me told me placed his hand on the panel and showed me this room. He never told me how long this has been here. I doubt he knew.

They stop at the center of the room, by the piano. JONAS gently runs his hand along its smooth, black surface. THE GIVER raises the lid, exposing the golden, glimmering wires. They gleam in JONAS's eyes.

JONAS

But what is so special about a table? With the top tilted up, all the food will fall on the floor.

THE GIVER sits on the bench and opens the keyboard cover, revealing the gleaming keys. He flexes his fingers.

GIVER

Now don't judge me. I've had a life to figure this out and I'm still lousy.

He starts playing, his wizened hands stiff on the keys, his foot tapping a rhythm on the concrete floor. But the song is something we recognize as a Christmas hymn. Perhaps something a bit mysterious, like "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen." **This will connect with the final moment of the film.**

JONAS is transfixed, listening in a trance -- moved as only someone who hears music for the first time can be.

And yes, there are awkward moments when THE GIVER is off-key. The piano is far out-of-tune. He sometimes stops and hesitates, searching for the right note. And yet the melody is beautiful, emotional, and somehow sacred.

THE GIVER looks up at JONAS.

GIVER (CONT'D)

This is called, "Music."

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY - DAY

MONTAGE. As the music plays on, Community residents are going about their daily business. Riding their bicycles, swaddling children, FIONA helping the old, FATHER as a Nurturer, LILY laughing with friends in school, etc.

ALL OF THIS PREVIOUSLY MUNDANE ACTIVITY IS NOW INFUSED WITH DEEP MEANING AND EMOTION AS THE GIVER'S MUSIC PLAYS OVER IT.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAY

THE GIVER finishes playing. And they are both very still, as the last notes fade away into silence.

THE GIVER looks up at JONAS. JONAS is overwhelmed. A real smile from THE GIVER. The moment lingers.

INT. JONAS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

JONAS sits on his bed, getting ready for sleep. He is folding his clothes neatly in the cupboard, HUMMING THE GIVER's melody. MOTHER appears in the door. She is tentative, but very curious. When he sees her, JONAS stops humming.

MOTHER

So... how is your training, Jonas?

JONAS

(Guarded.)

Good. I'm really enjoying it,
Mother.

MOTHER

Enjoying? I was...afraid. No. Wrong word. I was...*concerned* when they mentioned there would be pain...

JONAS

Honestly, I have not experienced any pain. Yet.

The two look at one another.

MOTHER

As you know, my Assignment is in the Department of Justice, adjudicating the, well...*conflicted* opinions of the Elders.

(She laughs a little to soften the moment.)

Some...some of the Elders wonder what goes on inside that building. And since you are the first one to have access...I thought you might-

JONAS

I'm forbidden to talk about it.
And, truthfully, it is better for
everyone if they don't know.

MOTHER

(Laughs.)

Oh, I'm being rude... by prying. I
apologize.

JONAS

I accept your apology. Mother.

MOTHER

(Walking out.)

I hope I can sleep tonight. The
newchild and all his crying...

(trails off)

Well... good night then, Jonas.

JONAS

Good night.

MOTHER stops on the other side of JONAS's door. She *thinks*.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

JONAS rolls up his sleeves. THE GIVER grips his wrists.

GIVER

You may not understand exactly
where you are or what's happening,
but just *Feel*.

JONAS

Like when my family shares their
Feelings at breakfast?

GIVER

No. I want you to truly *feel*.

CUT TO:

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - NIGHT - MEMORY

JONAS, dressed in a tuxedo, is seated at the center of an enormous wedding celebration. There is LAUGHTER AND MUSIC here. The large ballroom is filled with guests. The tables are covered in crisp white linen and stunning flower arrangements. Early 20th Century jazz is played by a live band. A beautiful white-gowned BRIDE leans down and whispers in the GROOM'S ear.

He stands, and bathed in smiles and applause, formally leads her to the dance floor. All eyes are on them as they begin to dance. They are alone at first, then joined by more and more people -- THE ELDERLY, CHILDREN, GUESTS OF ALL AGES AND RACES, as JONAS observes. He feels a tap on his shoulder and turns. A BEAUTIFUL GIRL, perhaps the BRIDE'S SISTER, extends a hand, sheepishly asking him to dance. He takes her hand.

As they spin on the dance floor, JONAS notices the GROOM put his lips on the bride's -- A PASSIONATE KISS. He glances shyly at the GIRL in his arms. A great feeling, something he now recognizes as LOVE, swells inside him. His face lights up, and as the music becomes more and more frenetic, JONAS WHIRLS his laughing dance partner FASTER AND FASTER, until the room, the people, the whole memory, is a BLUR OF COLOR AND LIGHT.

CUT TO:

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY - MEMORY

CLOSE: JONAS'S blue eyes, wide with wonder. A screaming NEWBORN is handed to JONAS by a 1940's NURSE. JONAS gingerly HOLDS the child as the infant tightly grips JONAS'S index finger with his tiny hand. JONAS BEGINS TO CRY himself, with the PURE, RAW EMOTION of the moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. BENCH BY A LAKE - EVENING - MEMORY

JONAS stands behind a bench where an ELDERLY COUPLE sits, watching the water. The ELDERLY MAN puts his hand on the ELDERLY WOMAN'S. Her eyes are moist.

CUT TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

THE GIVER'S HAND on JONAS's wrist. THE GIVER pulls it away. JONAS sits, transfixed, by profound emotions.

JONAS

That...all of that - Do the pills
stop us from FEELING all that? I
mean, it was-

GIVER

There is nothing like it, is there?

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JONAS is in the living room, alone. Eyes closed, he holds his arms out to an invisible dance partner, humming the jazz song and reenacting the dance from the wedding memory. GABRIEL is on the floor, looking on and smiling. As JONAS spins, LILY enters the room. She looks at him as if he's gone insane, but quickly JONAS takes her hands and they begin to SPIN, faster and faster, and faster. LILY laughs. JONAS is still in his reverie. Attracted by the sounds, MOTHER and FATHER appear in the hallway. They are dressed in their sleeping clothes. FATHER still has a toothbrush in his mouth.

MOTHER

Jonas! What are you doing to your sister?

JONAS startles out of his trance. He lets go of LILY.

JONAS

I...I

MOTHER

Your hands were-

LILY

Oh, Mother don't-

JONAS

It was-

MOTHER

If this is something to do with your training, we'd appreciate if you did not involve Lily. Or us.

She glances at FATHER for support. He just nods, his mouth full of toothpaste.

JONAS

You don't understand.

MOTHER

You didn't want me to understand. And now Jonas...I don't think that I want to either.

MOTHER leaves the room, beckoning LILY to follow. FATHER looks at JONAS, sympathetically, then follows MOTHER up the stairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

FIONA puts her bike into a port and skips up the steps.

JONAS (O.S.)

Fiona?

FIONA turns, but she's not startled. She smiles.

FIONA

Hello, Jonas! I haven't seen you
for-

JONAS

Fiona, what do you think would
happen if you stopped talking the
pain medication?

FIONA looks at him as though this were a joke.

FIONA

(Laughing a little.)
I guess...when I close my hand in
the door it would...what's the
word...it would "sting," a little?

JONAS just stares at FIONA a moment.

JONAS

And why is that bad?

FIONA doesn't quite know what to say. She chalks it up to a
joke. She gives him a kind smile.

FIONA

Have a nice day, Jonas.

She enters the HOUSE OF THE OLD.

GIVER (V.O.)

I started you with memories of
pleasure. My previous experience
gave me the wisdom to do that...

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNA - DAY - MEMORY

Under a blazingly hot sun, JONAS hides, crouching behind a
dusty acacia bush. He licks his dry, chapped lips but there's
no relief there -- the sun beats down mercilessly on this
windswept plain and this patch of vegetation.

Along with the deafening buzz of cicadas, JONAS continues to
hear his remembered conversation with THE GIVER.

GIVER (V.O.)

But our training... must introduce
what always goes hand in hand with
pleasure. I'm afraid...we must take
the next step.

The sharp crack of rifles, shouting of MEN, and a continuous crashing sound of something running -- tearing branches from the trees. It all ends with an ANIMAL CRY OF PAIN, and an immense THUD that shakes the ground. Excited voices call to each other.

GIVER (V.O.)

There were other living things,
unlike you and me, unlike the
plants which you eat. Once,
once...once there were-

JONAS rises from his crouch, just enough to peer out from behind the bush. He sees MEN, some with black skin, some with white, CARRYING away the tusks of a fallen ELEPHANT. The tusks make a LOUD CLATTER as the men throw them into the backs of the vehicles. Smoking cigarettes, they laugh and call out to each other while putting away their rifles and machetes. JONAS crouches back down, horrified.

We hear engines start up. The men drive away, tires spinning in the dry earth. JONAS peeks out and cries out in pain, as a PEBBLE thrown by the spinning tire, HITS him just above the eye. He winces and touches the small wound -- examines the SMEAR OF BLOOD on his finger with wonder.

Now another, older, female ELEPHANT emerges from the trees. Slowly and quietly, she walks across the trampled grass to the fallen carcass and looks down. The old MOTHER begins to STROKE the body with her trunk, then reaches up to the tree and breaks off some leafy branches, with which she attempts to cover her fallen SON.

Finally, MOTHER ELEPHANT raises her massive head and ROARS into the empty landscape. A sound of RAGE AND GRIEF that goes on and on.

As he watches this, a TEAR escapes JONAS's eye and rolls down his cheek. He touches it and looks at his fingers as the blood has mingled with tears.

INT. LILY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JONAS leans over the bassinet and looks down at the crying GABRIEL. He glances over to LILY's bed. Her sleeping form doesn't move - having adjusted GABRIEL's incessant whines.

JONAS looks back at GABRIEL. He reaches into the bassinet and picks up the 'HIPPO.'

JONAS

(Quietly, to GABE.)

I'll tell you a secret if you promise not to tell anyone.

(GABRIEL whimpers.)

I'll take that as a promise. Well, this Comfort Object is not a hippo. This is an elephant. And it was a real thing, once.

(More whimpering.)

I wish it could calm you.

He puts his finger down and GABRIEL puts his hand around JONAS'S finger, as the INFANT did in the memory. Suddenly, a connection between the two and GABRIEL can see the REAL MOTHER ELEPHANT for an instant, emerging from the trees. JONAS pulls his finger back, shocked. But now...GABRIEL is quiet. For the very first time. Quiet.

FATHER comes to the door.

FATHER

Is something the matter, I heard Gabriel STOP crying?

JONAS and FATHER laugh. Then, JONAS starts to tiptoe away. Just as JONAS nears the door, GABRIEL starts to cry again. FATHER and JONAS smile.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Well, I call five seconds of silence an improvement.

The two leave the bedroom.

Then, a close-up of LILY in bed. Her eyes are open.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANES - DAY

JONAS cycles through the community, a new understanding and growing maturity reflected in his face.

THE GIVER'S MUSIC (*God Rest Ye*), now transformed in JONAS's head to the GIVER'S THEME, is heard over the following...

His MIND SWIMS WITH MEMORIES THAT HE'S RECEIVED, which we see in RAPID SNIPPETS:

FIRST, Paris, 1817 - JONAS RIDES AN OLD WOODEN ROLLERCOASTER in the front seat, zooming up and down.

He grins back at the SCREAMING PEOPLE, then turns forward, and also SCREAMS at the top of his lungs.

THEN, he GALLOPS on a gleaming, brown HORSE across a field of damp, green grass. He stops and dismounts near a small stream. Both he and the horse drink the clear water from the stream, as the SUN rises over a misty valley.

THEN, he finds himself in the midst of A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION. A close, loving family is gathered around a table. They are singing: "...happy birthday to you." The scene is silent. We can see them singing but cannot hear. As they finish, they turn to JONAS -- the center of attention, the BIRTHDAY BOY. And at their prompting to blow out the candles, he takes in a huge breath.

THEN, JONAS exhales a huge breath. He's CLIMBING a sheer, rock cliff. Thousands of feet above ground, his foot SLIPS for an instant, but he catches himself with his hands, and hangs precariously until he gains control again and resumes the climb. Finally, he crests the top of the rock, every muscle straining, face bathed with sweat. There he stands, looking out over a stunning landscape of jagged rock. And as we ORBIT around the cliff, JONAS LAUGHS with complete and unadulterated joy.

THEN, JONAS is among a clutch of people huddled in the doorway of a FLORIST on the Thames, caught in a sudden thunderstorm. A MAN has a large, WET DOG on a leash, which SPRAYS everyone as it SHAKES water off its fur. The people are drenched and cheerful, and the light over the river is strange and beautiful.

BACK IN THE PRESENT, JONAS cycles swiftly through the community, pedestrians stepping out of the way and staring as he zooms past. He skids to a halt beside THE GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, his back tire spitting gravel. He dismounts and places his hand on the sensor outside THE GIVER's door as the music buttons.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

JONAS comes in, ready for training. THE GIVER is HUNCHED OVER on the floor, hugging his body, rocking back and forth, his face pale and contorted with suffering. JONAS runs to him.

JONAS

Giver!

GIVER

Jonas -- please -- get away! Don't touch me, don't touch-

TOO LATE. JONAS reaches for the GIVER's hand to help him up. Their hands TOUCH, and JONAS EXHALES SHARPLY, as if punched in the stomach.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - MEMORY

It is complete, deafening CHAOS. The cold sun barely shines through clouds of acrid yellow and brown smoke. JONAS is lying face-down in frozen mud, surrounded by FALLEN SOLDIERS. The deafening GUNFIRE, and SCREAMS of the wounded are drowned out by the SHRIEKING of a WILD-EYED HORSE, trotting in panic through the mud, its bridle torn and dangling. It trips and FALLS to the ground right by JONAS.

JONAS presses himself into the ground in complete terror. BULLETS whistle overhead. THE ROAR OF CANNONS. Suddenly, he hears a faint VOICE near him.

SOLDIER

(Hoarse wheeze.)

Mother.

(Then a scream.)

Mother! Please! Somebody find my mother!

(Shrieking even louder)

I want to go home -- please--

A young wounded SOLDIER crouches on all fours nearby. He turns his face, and at the last moment locks eyes with JONAS, and then COLLAPSES. JONAS stares at death with horror and new understanding.

Then, a new voice SCREAMS from a near distance:

SERGEANT (O.S.)

Get up! Get up and charge! Now! Get
up, you bloody cowards!

And, suddenly, men all around JONAS -- men almost as young as he -- are STANDING UP and STUMBLING FORWARD, screaming a guttural cry of terror and rage. Most are CUT DOWN immediately by the enemy fire. JONAS finds himself RISING, almost against his will. He runs forward several steps, firing his rifle blindly at the unseen enemy, and suddenly a SEARING PAIN SLICES through him. He SCREAMS and FALLS, into darkness, as if into an abyss. FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK we hear THE GIVER's concerned voice.

GIVER (O.S.)

Jonas. Jonas!

FADE IN:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

JONAS lies CONTORTED with pain on the floor, having wedged himself under the desk. THE GIVER is on his knees beside him. He leans over JONAS, his hair hanging in long strands, concern and guilt showing on his face.

JONAS opens his eyes. They are haunted. THE GIVER looks away.

GIVER

I couldn't shield you forever.
 Forgive me, Jonas. You are so
 strong, Jonas. Stronger than I was.
 So much stronger.

JONAS

(Still writhing in pain.)
 Something ripped through my chest.
 It's there. I feel it. It's there.
 When the boy, Caleb, when he went
 into the river, was it like that?
 Was this what it feels like to...to
 disappear? To, be taken into the
 darkness and...
 (He's bleary and fade.)
 To be taken...

GIVER

Give me your hands, please.
 This will help. I promise you.

EXT. MANGROVE FOREST - DAY - MEMORY

JONAS is lying on his back in a flat-bottomed rowboat as it drifts amidst the tree trunks which grow right out of the water. Dappled sunlight breaks through the tree canopy and warms his body. Somewhere nearby, we hear the rhythmic sound of the ocean surf.

GIVER (V.O.)

I found this memory a long time
 ago, when I was almost as young as
 you are now. It has soothed me.
 What do you see?

We slowly drift, looking up at the trees. It has a calming, hypnotic effect. JONAS looks up at the branches and squints against the sun.

JONAS

(Whispering.)
 Trees. Sun.

(MORE)

JONAS (CONT'D)

Oh, wait -- there is *one* yellow leaf on each of these trees. And the rest of the leaves are green.

GIVER (V.O.)

Good. Very good, boy. That is called a "Sacrifice Leaf." In a forest which grows on the ocean shore. You see, the water there mixes with the sea water, and the sea water has things that are poisonous to these trees. So, one leaf is designated by the tree to be the "Sacrifice Leaf." It absorbs the poison and holds it inside, and away from all the other leaves. Saving them.

JONAS, in the boat, relaxes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

JONAS looks better, revitalized and calmed by the memory.

JONAS

I guess, then, that our responsibility is to be that yellow leaf. We feel the pain while the others-

GIVER

And is that fair?

JONAS

Fair or not, someone has to-

GIVER

But when do your parents feel sad, Jonas? When do they hurt? When is your sister allowed to miss her Comfort Object? When are you, just a boy, allowed to confide in a friend about all the HARD and TERRIBLE things I've told you?

JONAS

But I'm forbidden-

GIVER

BUT WHY DO YOU ACCEPT THAT?

JONAS is shocked. He glances fearfully at the wall speaker. The glowing red light is off.

GIVER (CONT'D)

The Community thinks that life is all pleasure. That everything is good. Well, you can't know good without bad. You can't know down without up. And without the memories of all that lived backandbackandbackandback, the lives of those we know NOW is meaningless. Yes, we bear the burden, but, Jonas, they are the ones who suffer.

JONAS

I...I don't believe that, Giver.

GIVER

Oh, no?

JONAS

When I'm happy, I'm not thinking about how I'm NOT crying. I'm just happy. I like my friends. I like my Family Unit. And if this role, if holding in the pain for this Community allows everyone to have a fine life, well, that's fine by me.

EXT. THE FALLS - DAY

The water crashes down on rocks.

EXT. THE SANDY STRETCH - DAY

JONAS and ASHER sit, dangling their legs over the 10 foot drop where their bikes raced at the top of the film. The rush of the water is heard just over the edge. ASHER is ebullient, sparking in his black uniform. JONAS has a heavy heart.

ASHER

They're saying that no one has learned maneuvers faster than I have. Do you see this pin? They gave me this pin and I have it on good authority no one my age has EVER received the pin this EARLY-

JONAS

I thought you said the Jet flew itself.

ASHER stares at JONAS.

ASHER

Well, *mostly*. But there are MANY decisions I make that...I mean-

JONAS

Did it occur to you that they give you that pin just to make you happy? So that you don't question why you're even in the Jet to begin with?

ASHER turns, looking to JONAS.

ASHER

Is the secret of your Assignment that you get turned into a boring, angry person?

JONAS

Why does our food all taste the same?

ASHER

So that there aren't...sort of...messed up apples in the bunch and-

JONAS

What is Elsewhere? Is it another Community?

ASHER

Well, of course it's another Community. When the Old are released, they go to place where-

JONAS

How do you know?

ASHER is silenced. JONAS won't stop.

JONAS (CONT'D)

Tell me. How many people are there? In our community.

ASHER

As many as fit in the Odeon to see
the Ceremony of the Groooooaan.
Just count the seats and you'll-

JONAS

Who built The Community? How old is
it?

ASHER

I -

JONAS

And what was here before the
community?

ASHER

Before the community?

He looks into his lap and laughs a little, but it really just
covers that he doesn't know what to say.

JONAS

Do you think all of this, ALL OF
THIS, just *appeared* one day?

ASHER

(Standing.)

That's enough. I'm going to be
late-

JONAS

I'm the Receiver. You *have* to
answer me. It's in the Rules.

ASHER

I may play by the rules now, but
I'm still Asher.

ASHER walks away, leaving JONAS with his legs dangling,
staring out over the edge of the Falls.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. MEDIEVAL ENGLAND, MUDDY ROAD - DAY - MEMORY

JONAS STUMBLES along a muddy track on the outskirts of a
village. His cheeks are sunken hollows. There is desperate
hunger in his eyes. Dressed in RAGS, he limps weakly, leaning
on a crooked stick.

The trees on the edge of the track are bare and skeletal against the gray sky. Huge BLACK CROWS mock him from the branches.

JONAS comes to the first house and knocks on the door. A SHADOW moves quickly INSIDE. There is a faint CREAK of the floorboards. Then, NOTHING. Just the sound of a bell tolling somewhere. JONAS knocks again.

JONAS

Help me. Please I beg you, help me.
Just some food, please.

MALE VOICE

Get gone, bloody *death carrier*! Get
gone or I will set the hounds on
you!

JONAS backs away fearfully and stumbles to the next house, but before he can approach the door, a GROUP OF VILLAGERS brandishing WOODEN POSTS and AXE HANDLES appears and confronts him with MURDER in their eyes.

VILLAGER WOMAN

Get gone, devil! We've lost most
everyone already. Don't come 'ere
with your disease and begging. We
still have children.

A LARGE MAN SLAMS one end of the POST into JONAS's chest, and pushing him in this fashion, literally RUNS him out of the village. JONAS trips and falls back on the road. The man SMASHES JONAS in the back with the post for good measure, then walks back toward town, tossing the wood away.

JONAS lies there weeping in the mud. He COUGHS into his hand, and sees that it is now SPATTERED WITH BLOOD.

A large CROW glides down from a branch and lands right next to him. It regards him with its beady, black eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

THE GIVER holds JONAS's hands. He does not let go.

GIVER

But sometimes--

And we're BACK to...

EXT. MEDIEVAL ENGLAND, MUDDY ROAD - NIGHT - MEMORY

Later that night. A first frosting of snow. Buffeted by the wind blowing off the dark fields, JONAS lies shivering in the middle of the road. He is near death.

There is a sound of FOOTSTEPS approaching. JONAS cowers with his arms over his head. When nothing happens, he looks up carefully. A YOUNG GIRL (8), haggard and pale, stands in the moonlight. She holds a steaming wooden bowl. She glances over her shoulder at the village, then carefully SETS the bowl down by JONAS's feet, and runs away, glancing back only once.

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, ROOF - DAY

He and JONAS sit side by side. JONAS SHIVERS with weakness and terror from the memory he has just experienced. And generally, he looks like he's GROWN MORE WEARY. The MEMORIES BEGINNING TO WEIGH HIM DOWN. THE GIVER wraps a blanket from the couch around JONAS's shoulders.

JONAS

I felt like I wanted to just give up. Like nothing mattered.

GIVER

Tell me what it was.

JONAS

A memory of Hunger and Illness.

GIVER

What are they?

JONAS

You don't want to know.

GIVER

But I knew only a minute ago.

JONAS

And now your life is better for not knowing.

THE GIVER looks to JONAS, how wise he has become.

JONAS (CONT'D)

What is Elsewhere? Is it another Community?

GIVER

What do you think it is?

JONAS

No TESTS. I have seen so much, I have FELT so much that I don't want any more TESTS. I want answers. How old is this Community? Where did this place from?

The GIVER stands, JONAS follows.

INT. GIVER'S LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

The GIVER pulls a folio from the library. He sets it down on his desk and undoes a faded violet ribbon. He opens the folio and there is a cracked, ancient MAP of the COMMUNITY. We see the waterfall, it extends only halfway around the PLATEAU.

JONAS

This is a map.

The GIVER puts a trembling finger on the paper, tracing the waterfall.

GIVER

I believe this to be the oldest document in the library. I don't know who made it. I don't know when it was made. This was before they extended the waterfall. Before they built the bridge.

JONAS

Why did they build the bridge?

GIVER

I don't know. Maybe a Receiver knew once. But that memory is gone.

JONAS catches sight of what a drawn, spiky wall, like the ribs of an animal, surrounding the edge of the map. JONAS reads the small handwriting.

JONAS

"The Outer Edge." What does that mean?

The GIVER closes the folio.

GIVER

I know you hunger for answers, Jonas, but I could give you every memory I have and you will only have more questions.

A small smile from THE GIVER.

GIVER (CONT'D)
Perhaps that is why I like you.

JONAS smiles too.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

FATHER, crouched on all fours, plays on the floor with GABRIEL. LILY is on the couch drawing. MOTHER is doing some work at the desk. She frowns at some papers in front of her, and closes a folder. JONAS sits in an arm chair, slightly dozing.

MOTHER
(re: GABRIEL)
Did he pass the Tests of Maturity?
I mean -- I really hope so -- after
all the extra time you've put in
with him--

FATHER
They're still not happy about that
nightly fretfulness. But I've asked
for an extension. A few days.

MOTHER
Are you sure Release is not the
best option?

A silence.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Maybe it would be for the best.
They have a way of dealing with
Infants in Elsewhere. And we could
all finally get some SLEEP.

FATHER
Well...

LILY
If they Release Gabriel, can we get
another newchild? One who's fun to
play with?

JONAS opens an eye.

JONAS
Why don't...why don't we put
Gabriel's crib in my sleepingroom
tonight? It only seems fair.
(MORE)

JONAS (CONT'D)
You've dealt with him. Lily sure
has. Why don't I give it a try.
Couldn't hurt, right?

MOTHER and FATHER look at one another. What could it hurt?

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS'S SLEEPINGROOM - NIGHT

GABRIEL is awake and CRYING. JONAS lifts GABRIEL and pats his tiny back, but the infant still squirms and flails his arms. JONAS takes his tiny hand and concentrates with visible effort.

It works. GABRIEL SPASMS in JONAS'S arms, then gradually starts getting calmer as the moment melts into:

EXT. LAKE - DAY - MEMORY

On a placid lake, aboard a small but elegant sailboat, under a sultry blue sky, JONAS holds GABE in his arms. Both boys' eyes are closed. The strong, yellow sun bakes their skin golden. The light flickers on the waves like a carpet of stars. The water gently slaps the hull of the boat. JONAS opens his eyes and looks into GABE'S. Their eyes are both a piercing crystal blue. GABE gurgles a cheerful sound and then falls promptly asleep. JONAS looks at the boy's sleeping face and smiles, feeling deep contentment.

INT. JONAS' SLEEPINGROOM - LATER

GABE sleeps peacefully in JONAS's arms. The camera pulls back.

FADE OUT.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAWN - MEMORY

JONAS opens his eyes. He is in the bedroom of an old country house. He rubs the sleep from his eyes and looks around the room. In the semi-darkness, he can see the clothes, toys and decor of a mid-20th-Century 12-year-old boy. Scattered about: a train set, rocket ship, plastic dinosaurs. He sits up and looks out the window. In the pre-dawn light, he can see pine woods, covered by a thick blanket of snow. He hears soft LAUGHTER and a mysterious sound coming from downstairs, which we recognize as a CHRISTMAS CAROL, "*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen.*"

JONAS gets out of bed. He has on flannel pajamas. He slides his feet into a pair of soft slippers. He gingerly 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 STAIRCASE, past framed photos of family.

He turns a corner into a LARGE LIVING ROOM, where he finds a FAMILY putting the finishing touches on a tall, gorgeous CHRISTMAS TREE. It twinkles with multi-colored lights. There is a MOTHER and FATHER, a younger BROTHER, an older SISTER, and a GRANDFATHER and GRANDMOTHER. A ginger cat is sprawled on the couch. Candles flicker in polished golden holders, and the mantle is decorated with dozens of Christmas cards. JONAS stands in the doorway and takes in this warm scene with wonder. The GRANDMOTHER beckons JONAS to her. After a moment's hesitation, he walks over and sits on the arm of her chair. She puts her arm around him, hugs him tight to her, and tenderly touches her cheek to his.

The FATHER reaches down behind the couch and lifts up a tiny Golden Lab PUPPY, a red bow tied around its neck. He presents it to JONAS. The puppy vigorously licks JONAS's face as he laughs and tries to turn away from its wet tongue.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

THE GIVER and JONAS stand by the bridge, just out of earshot of the SECURITY GUARD. He stands, almost leaning on THE GIVER, and we sense the warmth between them.

JONAS

It was beautiful. Are you sad that you don't have it anymore?

GIVER

A little.

JONAS

You said it was your favorite.

GIVER

Well, do you like it?

A moment.

JONAS

I do, Giver.

Another moment.

JONAS (CONT'D)

Though it didn't seem very practical. I mean, a tree *inside*.

GIVER

Mm. Why was there a tree inside?

JONAS

And they had the Old living right in the dwelling. They were Parents-of-the-Parents. So my Parents must have Parents. Where are they?

GIVER

They must have been the people who live in The House of the Old. Just like your Mother and Father will eventually. Where they'll be well cared for until their Release Ceremony.

JONAS

That family had a *feeling* -- there was something right there in the room -- something strong --

GIVER

Was it *Love*? I still have a few memories of that.

(Chuckles.)

You'll have to pry those out of me.

Trying out the word...

JONAS

Love.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The FAMILY UNIT is together after their evening meal. FATHER feeds GABRIEL with a spoon. GABRIEL turns his face away from every spoonful, until his face is covered in vegetable mush.

JONAS

Father, Mother, I have a question.

FATHER

What is it, Jonas?

JONAS looks embarrassed to say it.

JONAS

Do you-- love me?

There's an awkward silence, then FATHER gives a little chuckle.

FATHER

Jonas. You of all people. Precision of language, please.

MOTHER

Your Father means that you used a very generalized word, so meaningless -- it has become obsolete, archaic.

JONAS

Meaningless?

MOTHER

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

FATHER

Or, "Do we take pride in your accomplishments?" Wholeheartedly, "yes."

MOTHER

But, "love"-- it's an inappropriate word. Too vague. Do you understand?

JONAS

(A wan smile.)

Yes, thank you, I understand.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

THE GIVER holds JONAS's wrists, looking him straight in the eye.

GIVER

Sometimes, we are not only victims, but also... much too often, the aggressors.

JONAS TENSES as the memory flashes into his consciousness.

INT. CATTLE CAR - DAY - MEMORY

We are inside a cattle car as it rocks side to side, its wheels clattering on uneven rails. Shafts of light slice through the gaps in the walls. Dust motes swarm in the air above PEOPLE SITTING ON THE FLOOR. They are mostly in shadow;

all we see are their shapes and outlines, and all we hear are their faint moans. PULL BACK and reveal a silhouette of a SOLDIER with a German Shepherd on a leash, a machine gun slung on his shoulder. We MOVE AROUND HIM, revealing JONAS as the soldier, a cruel, uncaring look on his face, as he regards the suffering humans in front of him with a cold indifference.

A MAN reaches a trembling hand across the floor, toward JONAS. He looks down, as if at an insect, and pushes the hand away with the tip of his boot.

CUT TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

JONAS lifts his head and looks at THE GIVER, shamefaced.

JONAS

I didn't feel bad for those people.
Even though I know I should. I
could see they were suffering right
in front of me. But I didn't do
anything. I guess, I was scared of
what would happen to me if I tried
to stop it. Or...

GIVER

Or...

JONAS

Or maybe I even enjoyed it.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

JONAS cycles past the playground. JONAS looks around, but the play area seems to be deserted. He walks out into the middle of the grassy area.

VOICE

Psheew! Psheew!

An 11-year-old GIRL comes staggering forward from her hiding place behind a bush. A BOY, about her age, chases her, holding his hand strangely -- OUTSTRETCHED PALM POINTING FORWARD, not quite like a gun, but still pretending to shoot her.

BOY

Bang! Pow!

The GIRL runs in a zigzag pattern, and at the last "shot," pretends to be hit. She falls to the ground and "dies."

Three more boys run from behind a nearby storehouse, "firing" their imaginary weapons, arms outstretched, palms out.

BOYS

Attack!

Another GROUP appears.

GROUP

Counterattack!

Several of them stop running, clutch imaginary wounds, and fall to the ground, giggling. As they play, they are careful not to make any physical contact with each other.

JONAS, trapped in the middle of the fray, stands there, incensed.

JONAS (CONT'D)

What's WRONG with all of you?

Alongside the road, FIONA passes. She stops, seeing JONAS yelling at the children.

JONAS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

A STRONG GIRL steps forward.

STRONG GIRL

We were just playing, Receiver.
It's called "War." It's a fun game.
Didn't you play it too after
school?

JONAS knows the answer is 'yes.'

STRONG GIRL (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It's all pretend.
We're not actually *hurting* each
other.

CHILDREN laugh.

A BOY from the COUNTERATTACK group runs to the front.

BOY

Land mine!

All the CHILDREN scream and run down the playground, far away. JONAS stands there, alone. FIONA approaches.

FIONA
What's wrong?

JONAS
They...they don't GET IT.

FIONA stands there, baffled, but earnestly trying to understand.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Have you thought about what I asked you?

FIONA
(Smiling, but still worried.)
What? What did you-

JONAS
If you were to stop taking your medication.

FIONA
But it's against the rules.

JONAS
I'm the Receiver and you have to do anything I say, Fiona.

She stops smiling. She stares at him. Then-

FIONA
Fine.

JONAS
(Surprised.)
What?

FIONA
If that's what you say, then I'll do it. But only one night. I won't take the medication that stops the pain and stops the stirrings.

JONAS
Tomorrow, Fiona. Don't take it and then meet me at the Triangle. Do you know where that is?

FIONA
Asher has boasted to me about it about a billion times.

JONAS
Meet me there. Don't tell anyone.

FIONA
Don't tell-

JONAS
Please.

A moment.

FIONA
All right.

They stare at one another.

FIONA (CONT'D)
Tomorrow night, Jonas.

She walks away, leaving JONAS alone, in the middle of the green field.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

JONAS walks in the door.

JONAS
Giver, I've done something. I need to admit that I have told something from the Community not to take her medication and-

He stops and looks around. The room is empty.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Giver?

JONAS peeks into a couple of corners, making sure THE GIVER is not there. He walks to the wall of the underground chamber and listens. It's quiet.

JONAS walks to the console on the wall, next to the speaker. There are strange-looking buttons on the surface. He pushes a button experimentally. A VIDEO SCREEN comes on above the wall speaker, startling JONAS.

JONAS tries to turn off the screen, and pushes the buttons again.

SPEAKER
How may I help you, Receiver?

JONAS panics and pushes all the buttons at once.

Sensing something behind him, he turns and SCREAMS when he sees, sitting at the desk, a 12-YEAR-OLD BLOND GIRL, bent studiously over a drawing.

He stands petrified. After a moment, he speaks tentatively.

JONAS

Hello--

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 her half of a conversation with someone, *looking past JONAS*.

GIRL

(Smiles.)

Oh, hello.

(A moment.)

Am I? Really?...

On the video screen, over JONAS's shoulder, we see The GIVER, HURRYING down a lane. JONAS is too entranced by the girl to notice.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Drawing.

(A moment.)

A horse.

(A moment.)

Sure.

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

GIRL (CONT'D)

The horse is a...a *my-thi-cal* animal.

(A moment.)

What did you say, Father?

(A moment.)

You're silly!

On the video screen, we see THE GIVER ENTER INTO THE RECEPTION ROOM.

GIRL (CONT'D)

(Looks away.)

No they're not!

There is a NOISE at the door. Hearing it, JONAS frantically presses buttons on the desk to shut off the video screen.

TOO LATE. THE GIVER walks in and sees JONAS and the GIRL.

JONAS
I apologize for--

GIVER
Don't...

He takes in the screen, the GIRL at the desk, then sighs and lowers himself onto the couch. He wearily gestures to the GIRL.

GIVER (CONT'D)
Jonas. Meet Rosemary. The previous Receiver.

JONAS
The previous Receiver? But how--

The GIVER just shakes his head. Then, the HOLOGRAM of ROSEMARY STUTTERS for an instant -- static lines run through it -- and it STARTS THE LOOP AGAIN.

ROSEMARY
(Smiles.)
Oh, hello.
(A moment.)
Am I? Really?...

GIVER
She does not exist...anymore.
Except in my memories. And this moving image.

JONAS tries to touch ROSEMARY's shoulder and his hand goes right through her. He looks at his hand as if he made her insubstantial. Then back at THE GIVER.

GIVER (CONT'D)
Hologram. A projection, kind of a replacement. For something lost...

JONAS
What happened?

GIVER
This was her when she was young. But then, when she was about your age, she was a Receiver. For five weeks. Five weeks, that's all. She was like you, Jonas. She wanted to experience everything-- I gave her only pleasant, beautiful memories, at first, but--

JONAS

But that's not the job.

GIVER

Then, she insisted that I not spare her... Poverty, Hunger, Terror... I had to, Jonas. She was chosen.

JONAS glances at ROSEMARY, TRAPPED IN HER HOLOGRAPHIC LOOP. He takes THE GIVER's hand.

GIVER (CONT'D)

She was trying to be brave. She trusted me. But gradually I saw the light go out of her eyes. Finally, one afternoon, I transferred a painful memory of a child taken from its parents-- she left here. She went to the Chief Elder and asked to be released.

JONAS

In the hologram, she called you...she called you father...

They sit in silence, watching ROSEMARY repeat in her loop. The afternoon light is beginning to fade, and the room falls into shadow.

JONAS (CONT'D)

So, she was released and went Elsewhere. To another community maybe. She's probably happy now... Was it nice?

GIVER

Was what nice?

JONAS

Her release. Did they tell any good stories?

THE GIVER peers intently into JONAS's eyes.

GIVER

(Smiling, as though he truly doesn't believe that JONAS doesn't know this.)

In all this time, have you not come to understand what is to be Released?

JONAS

Of course I know. They have drinks
and chant your name and tell
stories of your life.

THE GIVER stares at JONAS, then strides over to the speaker
on the wall and switches it on.

SPEAKER

Yes, Receiver. How may I help you?

GIVER

I would like to see this morning's
release.

SPEAKER

Thank you for your instructions.

JONAS watches intently. After a moment, the screen flickers,
and scrolling numbers appear at the bottom. Then, a small
windowless room -- pale carpeting, a table, a scale, a
cupboard, and a vase full of flowers.

JONAS's FATHER enters the room, wearing his Nurturer uniform.
He cradles a newborn, wrapped in a soft blanket. He is
followed by Dinah, the Assistant Nurturer.

JONAS leans forward excitedly.

JONAS

That's my Father! With a newchild!
That baby is as small as Gabriel
was when he came to our house.

On the screen, FATHER lays the baby on the table. He unwraps
its blanket. When the cold air hit its skin, the BABY begins
to squirm and cry.

FATHER (ON VIDEO)

Okay, okay. I'll be fast.

On the screen, FATHER opens the cupboard and takes out a
SYRINGE and a SMALL BOTTLE.

FATHER carefully inserts the needle through the bottlecap and
draws the liquid into the syringe.

From the security camera's vantage point in the upper corner
of the room, FATHER is seen from the back, as he brings the
needle down and appears to do something with it to the BABY.
He steadies the INFANT with one hand as the newborn WHIMPERS
faintly. JONAS watches, wide-eyed, not knowing how to react.

JONAS

But he--

Then he gets his answer.

FATHER (ON VIDEO)

(In a cute, soothing
voice.)

I know, I know. It hurts, but the
veins in your arms are too teensy.

The BABY cries louder.

FATHER (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)

(Cheerfully.)

Shh. Shh. All done. That wasn't so
bad, was it?

He steps back from the table, turns towards camera, revealing the tiny, inert INFANT. FATHER steps away and drops the syringe into a waste receptacle.

JONAS stares in shock, as his FATHER carefully folds the blanket and puts things away.

JONAS

He killed it! My father killed it!

On the screen, FATHER puts the tiny corpse of the INFANT into a cardboard box. He then opens a small square door in the wall. In the opening beyond, we see bright roaring FLAMES. FATHER SLIDES THE BOX INTO THE FIRE, SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT, and casually strolls out of the room.

With a burst of static, the screen goes black. JONAS looks at THE GIVER with haunted eyes, his lips trembling. THE GIVER stares at the blank screen, as he speaks quietly.

GIVER

When I asked about Rosemary's
Release, they turned on the
recording and showed me the same
process. They asked her to roll up
her sleeve...then the syringe...
But she knew what she was getting
into. She wasn't an infant. She was
your age, Jonas. And she wanted
what they gave her.

(Turning to JONAS.)

Go home, Jonas. We'll do more
tomorrow.

JONAS stands, fury filling his heart.

JONAS

Home? I am NOT going home! I won't
ever go there again. That is NOT my
Father. It is NOT my family.
I don't belong there at all!

(Breaking down.)

I want my real Mother, my real
Father, and not those people back
there. I want REAL friends. I
want...I want my *childhood back*.

THE GIVER hugs him tightly, trying to contain JONAS's pain.
JONAS breaks free, running to circular stairs leading UP.

GIVER

Jonas!

But JONAS is already gone -- through the door to the roof.
THE GIVER climbs the stairs after him with difficulty,
winching with every step.

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, ROOF - NIGHT

JONAS is at the far end of the roof garden. He stands looking
out at the community, fingers gripping the railing. THE GIVER
appears in the door and yells to JONAS from a distance.

GIVER

They can't help it. They know
nothing.

THE GIVER walks slowly toward JONAS. There is a hard
intensity in his eyes -- a dangerous edge.

GIVER (CONT'D)

It's the life that was created for
them. The life you and I would also
live in ignorance, had we not been
chosen.

JONAS

But it isn't NATURAL. They...my
Father should KNOW that...

GIVER

He doesn't know what he's doing,
Jonas. Don't stand there and
pretend to be a little boy when you
now hold more memories than I do.

JONAS

And what about the Old? Is it the
same?

THE GIVER stops right behind JONAS.

GIVER

They... we also kill the Old. Your friend Fiona is already being trained in the fine art of release. She's a very good student. Just as you would've been if you were chosen for her job.

JONAS WHIRLS AROUND to THE GIVER, a look of sudden realization on his face.

JONAS

It's you. You are the one holding all of this together. You and all the Receivers that came before you...

(gestures with his hand)

...backandbackandback--

THE GIVER towers over JONAS and grabs his hand. His eyes are cold -- there is a menace there, a feeling like he might hurt JONAS. JONAS TEARS his hand out of his grasp. They LOCK EYES, JONAS bravely staring back. After a long moment, THE GIVER just nods, meeting JONAS'S accusing look with grim acceptance.

GIVER

That is the truth.

JONAS

You had the memories. So did the Receivers before. At ANY MOMENT you could have told them what they were doing. You could have...you could have MADE them see.

GIVER

Could I have? Who'd believe me? They are not chosen.

JONAS

Tell them to stop taking the pills. Then...they'd feel stirrings and pain.

GIVER

(Smiling.)

A good idea. I, an old man who cannot see straight, should go and tell everyone: "LOOK. Stop taking those pills.

(MORE)

GIVER (CONT'D)

If you do, you will experience the marvelous glory of feeling intense, horrific PAIN."

JONAS turns away.

GIVER (CONT'D)

The Community was built the way it was for a reason. The grass may be greener, but if you don't know for sure, why, I'd stick with the lawn I've got.

JONAS

There has to be a way to make them understand. To...to give all these memories to them.

GIVER

They aren't CHOSEN. Do you expect to just storm the center of town and explain COLOR? Explain DEATH? Explain LOVE?

JONAS

What if there were NO RECEIVER. And NO GIVER. Then the memories would have to go somewhere, right?

GIVER

They would just die with us.

JONAS

But what if they didn't? What if...what if what was REAL and TRUE and NATURAL...what if all of *THAT* were released? What if all that were released if we...if we weren't here to hold it all inside.

Silence.

GIVER

It is a...a nice thought, Jonas, but running away is not the answer.

JONAS

It may not be the answer, but it's the only option I have.

EXT. THE TRIANGLE - EVENING

JONAS stands alone in the TRIANGLE. The night is perfect, as always. He paces. The soft WOOSH of the wall of water does little to calm his nerves. He has been stood up.

JONAS turns to walk away, and just as he does so, he sees a figure walk through the wall of water.

It's FIONA.

Her clothes are wet. Her hair is matted to her face. But she is there.

JONAS

You're-

FIONA doesn't say anything. She walks closer to JONAS. And closer. And closer.

They are nose to nose.

They kiss.

Slowly, the kiss ends.

JONAS (CONT'D)

You...

FIONA

What is happening to me, Jonas?
What have you made me do?

JONAS

You didn't take the medication. You are feeling...you're feeling what a person is SUPPOSED to feel.

They kiss again.

FIONA

This FEELS wrong. This FEELS-

JONAS

I love you, Fiona.

FIONA

Choose your words precisely.

JONAS

I am. For the first time, I don't need to second guess.

They put their foreheads together.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Will you come with me?

FIONA
What?

JONAS
Come with me.

FIONA
Where?

JONAS
I'm leaving. I'm leaving tonight
for Elsewhere. I can't...I can't BE
HERE anymore. This entire place is
one LIE.

FIONA takes a step back.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Wasn't it wonderful? Tell me what
you FEEL? Isn't it incredible to
be...to not be NUMB. To SEE
clearly. To...LOOK. Look at that
tree. Do you see that? That is
called GREEN. Can you see it? Do
you know what that MEANS?

FIONA reaches into her pocket and pulls out a PILL.

JONAS (CONT'D)
No...

FIONA takes the pill out of the glass housing.

JONAS (CONT'D)
(With tears in his eyes.)
Fiona...

FIONA swallows the pill.

FIONA
This is my home.

JONAS
Fiona...

FIONA disappears back through the wall of water.

JONAS stands, stunned. The camera pulls back.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE - EVENING

JONAS sits with his Family Unit eating dinner.

LILY

And she wanted to still wear her hair ribbon, but I explained that she was not a Sapling anymore.

JONAS

Do you know what a Sapling is? Do you know what a Cedar is? All the trees here are IDENTICAL. The words, the pictures they show at the Ceremony, they aren't just mythical. They can be REAL.

MOTHER looks at FATHER.

MOTHER

(To FATHER.)

This must be the Pain they said he'd feel.

FATHER

He seems confused.

JONAS

I'm not confused! And I know what you did at work.

FATHER

The release?

JONAS

The- YES! The release. How can you just SAY it so easily?

FATHER

Jonas?

Then, JONAS catches sight that GABRIEL is not in his high chair.

JONAS

Where is Gabriel?

No answer. Just clinking of forks on plates.

FATHER

Gabe went in for his Evaluation today, his Tests of Maturity.

JONAS

And?

FATHER just shakes his head with disappointment and sadness.

JONAS (CONT'D)

What happened?

FATHER

Well, the Evaluators had a discussion... They were cautious but still certain about the need for release -- chronic restlessness and...

JONAS

(Heart leaping into his throat.)

Release?

FATHER

Nothing could be done. Even I eventually ended up voting for it.

JONAS

When?

FATHER

First thing tomorrow morning.
(Then to the family.)
Well, we all certainly gave it our best try.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

THE GIVER sits across from Rosemary's HOLOGRAM, sorrow and longing etched on his face. He begins a conversation he's acted out a thousand times. A sad, private ritual.

GIVER

Hello, Rosemary.

ROSEMARY looks up and smiles.

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM

(Smiles.)
Oh, hello.

GIVER

You're special, did you know that?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM

Am I? Really?...

GIVER
What are you doing there?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM
Drawing.

GIVER
Drawing what?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM
A horse.

GIVER
May I see it?

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM
(A moment.)
Sure.

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

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM (CONT'D)
The horse is a...a *my-thi-cal* animal.

GIVER
Oh, but it isn't, my dear.

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM
What did you say, Father?

GIVER
Don't listen to what they teach you in school. One day I will teach you everything you need to know.

ROSEMARY HOLOGRAM
You're silly!

She smiles a smile of pure innocence. THE GIVER puts his head in his hands and WEEPS.

EXT. JONAS' NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

One by one, the lights in JONAS's neighborhood go out. The pathway lamps shine eerie and blue in the night. The only sounds are the flowing fountains and distant echoes of sonic booms somewhere in the dark sky.

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. He quickly fills his pack with all his possessions: three clothing changes, his toothbrush, a shiny rock which he kept on the windowsill, and lastly... the page from THE GIVER's book -- the one with the multicolored rainbow in the dark clouds above the shipwreck victims. JONAS runs his fingertips along the rainbow's curve and gently puts the page into his pack.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

THE GIVER sits at the piano and plays. His eyes are red-rimmed from crying, his long hair a mess of tangled strands. His fingers SOAR on the keys, channeling his heavy heart into a beautiful, surging melody.

EXT. JONAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

JONAS carries his backpack as he goes to the bike ports. His FATHER's bike has a specially designed baby carrier. He is wide-eyed and breathing hard -- terrified and overwhelmed by his actions as he backs the bike out. The strap on JONAS's backpack CATCHES on the bell ringer. It RINGS. JONAS freezes.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - NIGHT

THE GIVER plays on, the melody LOUDER AND LOUDER, his fingers flying on the keys.

EXT. COMMUNITY - NIGHT

JONAS's feet are a BLUR on the pedals, as he RIDES his FATHER's bike, fast, along the darkened lanes. His face is grim and resolute...

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

JONAS BURSTS into the empty, dimly lit room. He looks around, catching his breath, then hears the faint strains of the piano melody through the wall. JONAS runs to the wall plate and places his hand on it to open the secret passageway. Nothing. He BANGS on the wall with both fists.

JONAS

Giver! Open please, Giver!

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS, UNDERGROUND CHAMBER -
CONTINUOUS

THE GIVER hears the muffled banging, and stops playing. He walks to the entrance and places his hand on the wall. There's a click. JONAS breathlessly rushes down the tunnel.

JONAS

My little brother, Gabe. He's going to be released in the morning.

GIVER

He's *not* your brother, Jonas. He's--

JONAS

He is my brother. I'm not going to let them kill him. And I'm taking him with me.

GIVER

What are you talking about? Taking him where?

JONAS

Out there. Elsewhere. Wherever that is. And I want you to come.

THE GIVER does not respond. He brushes by JONAS and walks up the dim sloping tunnel in silence. He walks away from JONAS, footsteps echoing, quickly at first, then he SLOWS and STOPS. THE GIVER turns back abruptly to look at JONAS with a growing realization. Something in this boy's bravery may have changed him -- given him hope, conviction. We HOLD on his face for a few beats until we...

CUT TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

As THE GIVER crosses the dark room and sits at his desk. JONAS stands nearby, looking down at him, his hands clenching and unclenching nervously. THE GIVER looks intently into JONAS's eyes, and then out the window at the darkness beyond. JONAS follows his gaze. There seems to be nothing out there but a black, terrifying void.

GIVER

There are fast planes, heat sensors. You're going to have to be clever about it. Not just brave.

JONAS

You can come with me.

GIVER
Impossible.

JONAS
But why?

GIVER
The memories. They don't belong to us, but to all the people. Rosemary's memories flooded back to the community. Only five weeks' worth -- most of them pleasant, but still, people were not prepared. It was a disaster. The medications were slow in making them forget.

JONAS
So it IS true. If we leave, then the memories can be released.

GIVER
LISTEN TO ME. Do you know what it did? Do you know why it took so long for the Elders to even CONSIDER a new Receiver...

JONAS
It'll be good for them. This is what they *need* -- colors, love, even death and war and hunger and fear. They deserve to really feel things, the way we can -- true emotions, and not just "Feelings." They need to live.

He looks at JONAS with haunted eyes.

GIVER (CONT'D)
I don't have the courage that you do. I don't have the memories you do.

JONAS
I'm not leaving without you.

GIVER
I want to be Released, don't you understand that? I want to be with my daughter!

Silence. Time is short.

JONAS

Then be Released...be Released the way people were backandbackandbackandback. But that will come with time. For now, come with me.

A close-up of THE GIVER's face. He makes a decision.

GIVER

I have made the right decision in choosing you, Receiver. Thank you.

THE GIVER stretches out his hands to give JONAS a hug. This seems suddenly, but JONAS goes in for it. Suddenly, THE GIVER takes JONAS's wrists and the two fall to the floor wrestling.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. / EXT. ALL REMAINING MEMORIES

The last transfer -

A FLOOD OF MEMORIES. Blurs and flashes. Boats and wars and families and fish; stars and dunes and city streets and funerals; cats and baseball and graduation and a spider. Etc. Etc. Etc. Everything. Everything... Faster and faster, more and more. A cyclone of all existence.

Until suddenly, it stops.

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

JONAS and THE GIVER lie on the floor. A moment. Then, they begin to move. JONAS slowly heaves himself to his feet. He takes the arm (over clothing) of THE GIVER and, with much trouble, brings him to his feet.

The two look at one another.

Then, THE GIVER smiles.

JONAS

You tricked me. You said you would never lie to me.

(JONAS looks into his eyes.)

But I guess, you didn't.

Silence.

GIVER
What's your name?

Silence. JONAS is shocked. THE GIVER smiles - it's an easy grin. Effortless. This feels like a different person than before. This person is unburdened. THE GIVER looks around. He sees the piano.

GIVER (CONT'D)
What's that?

JONAS
That's...that's called a piano.

GIVER
(With a little curiosity.)
Huh.

JONAS
Do you...do you remember anything
from...from before you were The
Receiver?

THE GIVER just smiles at JONAS.

JONAS (CONT'D)
(With tears in his eyes.)
Do you know that you're The Giver?

THE GIVER
My name is Benjamin.

Silence.

JONAS
(Swallowing.)
I'm...I'm Jonas.

JONAS looks down at THE GIVER's hands. They're trembling.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Your hands...

Like an INFANT, JONAS closes one of his hands around THE GIVER's finger.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. A HOUSE AT CHRISTMAS - EVENING

A flash of the CHRISTMAS memory. The tree. A gasp of music.

CUT TO:

INT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

THE GIVER takes a step backwards.

GIVER

That was...that was beautiful. I...

Silence.

THE GIVER, exhausted beyond any exhaustion he's known, sits down. He looks up at JONAS.

GIVER (CONT'D)

It was very nice to meet you Jonas.
But I had better get some rest.

JONAS looks into THE GIVER's eyes.

JONAS

Goodbye...Benjamin.

EXT. NURTURING CENTER - NIGHT

JONAS rides his FATHER's bike up to the back door of the NURTURING CENTER, a round, clean, white building. As he gets off his bike, he sees the security camera mounted by the door. He hugs the wall in order not to be seen by the camera.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - NIGHT

JONAS sticks his head around a corner. The empty, darkened hallways radiate from a central desk like spokes on a wheel. Most of the lights are dimmed. The rooms have large glass panels. A night crew of white-smocked Nurturers go about their business here and there, creating pockets of light and activity.

JONAS creeps along, crouched down below the glass panels and out of sight, looking for the right nursery. Suddenly, there are loud voices, and a door opens at the end of the hallway. Bright light spills out and JONAS is momentarily blinded. He looks around frantically and ducks inside one of the darkened rooms.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, RELEASE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JONAS hides behind a door. From the floor, he looks around, wide-eyed, and realizes with horror that this is the room he saw on the video screen -- where his FATHER released the INFANT. JONAS gasps and lifts his hands from the floor, wiping them on his pants in disgust.

We hear footsteps down the hall. JONAS stands and backs away from the door, deeper into the room.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A female NURTURER comes down the hall, carrying a BOX. She comes RIGHT TO THE DOOR BEHIND WHICH JONAS IS HIDING and puts her hand on the door lever. Just then, her attention is drawn by an older male CO-WORKER behind her, down the hall.

CO-WORKER
Olga, we need you in the Days-Old
Ward right away.

NURTURER
(Indicating the box)
It's for the morning.

CO-WORKER
Hurry, please.

She goes INSIDE THE ROOM.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, RELEASE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Nurturer TURNS ON THE BRIGHT LIGHT and sets the box down on the counter. There is no sign of JONAS. She opens the box, murmuring to herself, and starts taking out blankets, wipes, and finally glass ampoules and syringes. She OPENS THE CUPBOARD and loads the supplies inside. We see that JONAS has crammed himself inside the cupboard. Wedged against the back wall, he holds his breath as the death supplies are placed right in front of his face.

The WOMAN finishes re-stocking, closes the cupboard, and leaves, plunging the room into total darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

FATHER stands in the doorway to JONAS'S bedroom. He looks dumbfounded as he regards JONAS's empty bed. He shuffles to MOTHER's bedroom and peers in tentatively.

FATHER
I apologize for disturbing you...

CUT TO:

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - NIGHT

JONAS looks out into the hall. The coast is clear. He moves across the hall, hunched over, peering up now and then into the rooms through the glass panels, trying to find the nursery. He peeks up once -- an empty examining room. He peeks up again -- a break room. He peeks up once more -- and sees...

INT. NURTURING CENTER, NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

...rows of smoky-plastic bassinets, each containing a silent, sleeping child. JONAS appears in the doorway, looking for GABE. He slips into the room and moves quickly along the rows, scanning the tiny faces -- they all look remarkably similar. GABE isn't here! JONAS sighs, defeated. Then, he hears CRYING, coming from an adjacent space. There's no mistaking the cry; it's definitely GABE.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Now both FATHER and MOTHER, wearing their nightclothes, stand in the hallway, staring into JONAS's empty bedroom.

MOTHER

Did you look in all the rooms?

FATHER

Even outside. I'm worried for him.
But maybe it's part of his
training...?

MOTHER

Maybe you're right, but I still
think we should report it. Leaving
a dwelling at night... is a major
transgression...

FATHER

You...you want to report Jonas?

MOTHER

We must follow the rules. We don't
have a choice, do we?

FATHER looks at MOTHER.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, NURSERY - NIGHT

JONAS stays low as he creeps through the Nursery toward the sound of the crying. In a special examining room at the back, he sees a young female NURTURER with GABE. GABE is very agitated. He THRASHES in her arms, his screams becoming more and more hoarse and desperate. The NURTURER sits, watching GABRIEL cry. She is exasperated, yet strangely impassive.

SUDDENLY, speakers all over the facility come to life with a THREE-NOTE TONE, startling her. The tone is followed by a PLEASANT VOICE.

SPEAKER

Attention, all Community residents.
We apologize about disturbing your
night rest, but nevertheless must
inform you to stand by for a Lost
Child Search Procedure. Unless
currently occupied professionally,
your involvement is mandatory.

The NURTURER looks up. There is a rising buzz of voices from the hallway. Happy for any excuse to abandon the screaming child, she gets up, puts GABE into a bassinet, and heads out the door and then into an office across the hall.

Watching her leave, JONAS sneaks up, and peeks into GABRIEL's bassinet. GABRIEL sees JONAS and his screams dissolve to sobs, as he looks up at JONAS with tear-filled blue eyes.

JONAS gently TAKES HOLD of GABE'S HAND, and transmits a memory, as he did in his bedroom. GABE sighs softly, closes his eyes and drifts off to sleep. JONAS takes GABE out of the bassinet and holds him tight, as he hurries out of the nursery, into the hallway.

INT. ASHER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

ASHER sits on the edge of his bed, pulling on his uniform.

INT. NURTURING CENTER, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

JONAS runs down the hall, GABE in his arms.

Unseen by him, a NURTURER comes out of an examining room and almost COLLIDES with JONAS.

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 run after him. He easily outpaces them.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - NIGHT

JONAS rides along the dark, silent lane, heart pounding in his chest. Suddenly, all around, BANKS OF FLOODLIGHTS COME ON. SPEAKERS on the lampposts EMIT A THREE-NOTE TONE followed by a soothing VOICE.

SPEAKER

Attention, please. We have a child missing from his dwelling. All citizens please report to Central Plaza for a Lost Child Search procedure.

JONAS veers off the lane and frantically pedals through the park. It is darker here. In the carrier, GABRIEL's head lolls side-to-side, as he is shaken by the uneven ground. JONAS glances back at him, but GABE is still fast asleep.

INT. JET HANGER - NIGHT

ASHER, yawning, pulls the hatch down on his Jet. Rows of lights along the wings illuminate.

EXT. GIVER'S LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

THE CHIEF ELDER, flanked by TWO OTHER ELDERS, presses the buzzer at THE GIVER's door. THE GIVER opens it and smiles at them.

GIVER

Hello. Would you like to come in?

CHIEF ELDER

(Smiles thinly.)

Hello, Benjamin. We have some wonderful news for you.

GIVER

Yes?

CHIEF ELDER
Your file now indicates that it's
time for your release.

GIVER
Marvelous.

CHIEF ELDER
Would you come with me?

GIVER
Marvelous.

EXT. COMMUNITY - NIGHT

Security Officers comb the streets. And now we see ordinary families in robes and sleepingclothes, armed with flashlights, also searching. A SECURITY OFFICER speaks to the search party. A holographic image of JONAS's face flickers in the air above him. It gives off a soft glow which illuminates the crowd.

SECURITY OFFICER
He's on a bicycle with a newchild.
They are both in grave danger. We
must be very precise in the way we
cover all areas.

EXT. COMMUNITY PARK - NIGHT

JONAS pushes the bike into the dense foliage. He looks up. Above him, attached to a tree, he sees two cameras scanning back and forth. He waits for just the right moment, then sprints, pushing the bike across the flowerbeds.

EXT. COMMUNITY LANE - NIGHT

THE ELDERS walk with THE GIVER. One holds his elbow, lightly.

CHIEF ELDER
And that's all you know about the
boy? He didn't say where he was
going?

THE GIVER is absolutely calm.

GIVER
Oh. Wait. I remember something...

The stop a moment and look at THE GIVER.

GIVER (CONT'D)
He was very kind.

THE ELDERS look at one another. Then, they continue walking.

EXT. PATH - NIGHT

Alone, FIONA, in robe, walks through the streets.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

THREE-WHEELED MOTORIZED VEHICLES buzz by. JONAS quickly pushes his bike in the dark into the flower bushes, hiding. The MOTORIZED VEHICLES STOP and GUARDS dismount.

GUARD 1
Start from the perimeter and work
inwards.

The GUARDS spread out. Low voices, flashlights stab shafts of light. JONAS lays the bike down, holds GABRIEL in his arms, and FALLS FLAT into the dirt between the flowers. The SEARCH PARTY passes.

JONAS looks up and sees that one of the MOTORIZED VEHICLES is right in front of him.

EXT. THE TRIANGLE - CONTINUOUS

FIONA takes a breath and enters THE TRIANGLE, expecting to find JONAS. Instead, in the center of the grass, sits the BOOK with the woodcut illustration of the shipwreck and the rainbow. FIONA kneels and picks up the book.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

A GUARD returns to where his MOTORIZED VEHICLE was. It's gone.

VOICE OF GUARD (O.S.)
I think we found the bicycle!

GUARD
I think we have a new problem.

EXT. RIVERSIDE LANE - NIGHT

JONAS, on the MOTORIZED VEHICLE with GABRIEL riding shotgun, blazes down the lane, THE RIVER by his side. He moves so quickly, it's easy for him to be mistaken for a GUARD.

He see THE BRIDGE nearing.

EXT. ABOVE THE PLATEAU - NIGHT

ASHER's plane hovers low to the ground, lights searching the land. We can see that he is nearing THE TRIANGLE. He moves a lever and the light shines into THE TRIANGLE.

It's empty. No JONAS. No FIONA. No book. ASHER swallows.

EXT. THE BRIDGE - NIGHT

JONAS dismounts the MOTORIZED VEHICLE and pulls GABRIEL into his arms. Keeping to the shadows, and out of the ever-present security cameras' view, JONAS sneaks near the bridge's entrance. He hides behind dense hedges, which surround an eight-foot-high concrete block. One end of the bridge ARCH rests on top of this block. JONAS peeks out and sees SECURITY OFFICERS ARRIVING from all directions to join those already at the bridge entrance. They huddle in the glare of the spotlights and talk in hushed tones.

Then, even more reinforcements arrive rapidly in a snarling INSECT-LIKE BLACK VEHICLE, this time from the other side of the bridge. These OFFICERS don't look as friendly as the ones in the community. They wear DARK VISORS over their faces and carry THIN METALLIC WANDS.

JONAS sits with his back to the huge concrete block and looks crestfallen. *The bridge is the only way out of the community and it's too well-guarded to cross.* He looks around frantically, then after a pause, LOOKS UP AT THE BRIDGE ARCH. The metal arch starts on top of the concrete block, across the road from the bridge entrance, and gradually curves up over the road, above the GUARDS. It soars high above the roadway of the bridge, and eventually slopes down to the other side of the river. JONAS GETS AN IDEA. *It's crazy, but it seems to be the only solution.*

He stands quietly and looks up at the ARCH. It's a death sentence. He looks down at GABRIEL. How is he going to carry GABRIEL and cross the ARCH? It seems impossible. Just then, a JET hovers down. THE GUARDS all look up to the JET, their eyes briefly blinded by the lights.

ASHER (FROM SPEAKER)
Attention. He has been located.

JONAS's heart falls. He's been found. Then -

ASHER (FROM SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
He is in the brush on the edge of
the Center Park. All are requested
to search. I will guard the bridge.

The GUARDS look at one another, then get into their vehicles and drive away. The JET lowers to the ground, the grass blowing hard and debris flies into JONAS's face and hair. He covers his eyes and shields GABRIEL. As the dust settles and the exhaust stops, JONAS lowers his arm from his eyes. Before him is ASHER.

JONAS
Ash...

ASHER
What are you doing, Jonas?

JONAS
Please, let us go.

ASHER
I can't lie, Jonas. You know that.

JONAS
You don't have to lie, but you
don't have to tell the truth
either.

A moment, while ASHER considers.

JONAS (CONT'D)
How many times did I cover for you?

ASHER
This is different. I'm a different
person now. And...Jonas...I think
you are too.

JONAS
Then do it for the old me.

A long stare. Then, ASHER turns and walks directly the edge of the bridge. He reaches onto his belt and removes a DISCIPLINE WAND. ASHER stands widely, covering the entire expanse of the bridge. JONAS sighs - it's all over.

ASHER
Well, are you coming?

JONAS looks up, a small smile.

JONAS and GABRIEL walk to the edge of the bridge.

ASHER (CONT'D)
Want to know something I always
wondered, Jonas? Why would they
build a bridge if they didn't ever
want someone to cross it?

ASHER steps aside. JONAS gives a look to ASHER - "Thank you."

A shot of the BRIDGE from the side, JONAS on the MOTORIZED
VEHICLE, blazing across the bridge. The black water roars
below.

EXT. COMMUNITY - MORNING

The sun rises over The Community. Everything is bright and
airy as before. People going about their business, except we
now see many more SECURITY OFFICERS patrolling everywhere.

INT. JONAS'S HOUSE - MORNING

LILY, MOTHER, and FATHER sit at the table eating their
breakfast quietly. There are two empty chairs - one for JONAS
and one for GABRIEL. Breaking the silence -

LILY
I heard Jonas tell Gabriel that a
'Hippo' is really an 'Elephant.'
And he said that once, a long time
ago, they were real.

MOTHER and FATHER ignore her, eating quietly.

LILY (CONT'D)
Could that be true?

FATHER rises, clearing the trays.

LILY (CONT'D)
(To herself.)
I like to think that's true.

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - CONTINUOUS

Among dozens and dozens of THE OLD, sits THE GIVER. He stares
into space. FIONA, bleary eyed, finishes with a nearby person
and passes THE GIVER.

GIVER
Hello.

FIONA
(Stopping.)
Oh. Hello.

GIVER
Do I know you?

FIONA
I don't think so. I'm Fiona. Are
you new here?

GIVER
I'm Benjamin. It's nice to meet
you.

THE GIVER's eyes glance down to FIONA's bag. The BOOK peeks
out of the top.

GIVER (CONT'D)
What's that?

FIONA looks down at her bag, embarrassed.

FIONA
I don't know.

GIVER
It looks nice.

FIONA looks at THE GIVER and smiles.

EXT. ROAD THROUGH THE FIELDS - MORNING

Fields of vegetation stretch in all directions, an unbroken
plane of flat green. There is SUNLIGHT here, and a light WIND
moves the leaves.

JONAS rides the MOTORIZED VEHICLE, trying to keep his eyes
open. GABE is beside him.

Suddenly, out of a cloudless sky, WATER STARTS FALLING onto
the fields. It is so precise that the road is kept completely
dry. JONAS and GABE, seen from above, ride between two walls
of falling droplets. A MULTICOLORED RAINBOW -- a real one
this time, appears in the swirling mist. JONAS and GABE look
up in wonder. GABE laughs with delight. JONAS, looking at
GABE, laughs a little too.

But then, SOMETHING DRAWS HIS ATTENTION. In the distance, in
the middle of the road, he sees a small, DARK OBJECT...

And IT'S GETTING BIGGER AND LOUDER. He brakes and freezes. Looks closer. A large, BLACK, INSECT-LIKE VEHICLE approaches rapidly. JONAS looks around wildly for a place to hide, then SPEEDS off the road, THROUGH AND INTO THE WALL OF WATER, and into the field. They are instantly DRENCHED, but hidden by the downpour. JONAS stands in the falling water, as it batters him from above, streaming down his face. He pulls large pieces of brush from the ground and tries to cover the MOTORIZED VEHICLE. As the INSECT-LIKE VEHICLE nears, JONAS stops all movement. He watches the vehicle pass by on the road.

The RAIN SUDDENLY HALTS, as if a faucet was turned off, completely REVEALING JONAS standing in the field. The vehicle is past them on the road, but it's still CLOSE. JONAS grabs GABE out of the MOTORIZED VEHICLE in his arms and the two of them fall flat into the MUD. GABE is about to cry, but JONAS covers the little boy's mouth just in time. Hugging GABE, JONAS presses himself flat into the wet, muddy earth. The BLACK VEHICLE SLOWS for a few seconds, then its engines HOWL, and it ACCELERATES and DISAPPEARS down the road.

JONAS lies there for a few moments. Then rises, completely covered in mud. He carefully puts GABE back into the vehicle.

JONAS

We have to stay off the roads.

Shivering in his wet clothes, he starts the MOTORIZED VEHICLE and the two ride deeper into the field, toward a line of trees in the distance.

EXT. ARTIFICIAL WOODLAND - DAY

JONAS crests a small rise and enters an artificial woodland. It has an antiseptic, park-like feel with deliberate tree placement, and pine needles strewn about in a pleasing way. This is a tree nursery for The Community. A small stream gurgles as it flows between concrete shores. Otherwise, it's very quiet here. The MOTORIZED VEHICLE sputters to a stop. JONAS tries to restart it, but it won't. Whatever powers the machine has run out.

JONAS looks exhausted. He gets out of the VEHICLE and picks up GABRIEL. He sets GABRIEL down on the ground, then rolls the MOTORIZED VEHICLE into the thick bushes.

JONAS drinks deeply from the stream and washes the mud from his face and hands. The cold water takes his breath away. JONAS collects water in his palms for GABE to drink from.

JONAS watches as the INFANT takes little slurps. It almost makes JONAS smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARTIFICIAL WOODLAND - LATER

JONAS'S eyes are closing from exhaustion, as he watches GABE crawl and investigate twigs and pine needles. Finally, JONAS scoops up GABE, and lies down on the soft needles under the trees, his head resting on his pack. GABE struggles cheerfully, full of energy now, thinking it's a game.

JONAS
 Sorry, Gabe. I know it's morning.
 But we really have to sleep now. We
 need rest.

JONAS's heavy eyelids begin to close.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

The deafening ROAR of a JET ENGINE. We PULL BACK out of the JET EXHAUST and reveal a BLACK FIGHTER JET slicing through the sky above the fields. WIDER, and we see it is part of a formation of ten identical planes.

CUT TO:

INT. PLANE COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Behind a half-mirrored visor, the PILOT'S eyes scan the displays with severe concentration.

PILOT
 (Into his helmet mic.)
 I have two stationary marks on heat-
 sensitive at two-zero-seven-alpha.

FROM THE JET PILOT'S POV, we see the HEAT SIGNATURE DISPLAY. JONAS and GABE are two BRIGHT WHITE DOTS amid dark gray bands of vegetation.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARTIFICIAL WOODLAND - CONTINUOUS

JONAS's eyes SNAP OPEN. He reacts to the SONIC BOOM, rolling like thunder above the trees.

JONAS
Heat sensors...

He grabs GABE's hands.

JONAS (CONT'D)
This will only be for a moment. I'm
sorry.

JONAS squeezes GABE's hands tightly, sharing a MEMORY--

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - DAY - MEMORY

JONAS and GABE IN THE SNOW under a sparkling blue sky in the backyard of a middle-class suburban home. Apple-cheeked with cold, JONAS watches GABRIEL stumbling around a half-built snow man.

EXT. ARTIFICIAL WOODLAND - CONTINUOUS

JONAS and GABE, eyes closed, lie with their arms around each other, SHIVERING WITH COLD.

INT. PLANE COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

From the PILOT'S POV, JONAS'S and GABE's white HEAT SIGNATURES DISAPPEAR, leaving just the gray bands of vegetation.

The PILOT NARROWS HIS EYES at the display. Then, after a moment's deliberation, keys his microphone.

PILOT
Cancel two-zero-seven-alpha. Failed
to acquire. Logging an unknown
equipment malfunction.

EXT. ARTIFICIAL WOODLAND - CONTINUOUS

JONAS and GABE shiver with cold and fear as the BLACK JET BANKS and ZOOMS OFF. JONAS looks up to make sure the Jet is gone, then picks up GABE. He, runs, as fast as he can, through the woodland strip, staying under tree-cover.

He runs and runs and looks over his shoulder and sees, up in the air, the perfect formation of JETS, just as at the beginning of the field.

There are so many, he's bound to be located.

To the side of the woods is a rushing brook. JONAS looks to the planes then to the water. And he makes a decision. Falling back into the water, holding GABRIEL as much as he can above him, he crashes down into the deep.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - DAY

THE GIVER looks up from his wheelchair as two WORKERS approach.

WORKER

It's time.

THE GIVER smiles, not knowing what they mean.

GIVER

Oh good.

CUT TO:

MURKY DARKNESS

A PULSE. JONAS and GABE DRIFT IN SLOW MOTION, in shadowy semi-darkness. Their faces are serene and tranquil, their eyes open. They appear completely weightless, peaceful -- like children in the womb.

JONAS looks up slowly, and we see what he sees -- A BRIGHT GLOW from above, luminous rays cutting through the nebulous gloom. There is a flicker of recognition in JONAS'S eyes, as he gathers GABE and SWIMS UPWARD, TO THE LIGHT.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ELSEWHERE RIVER, BASE OF WATERFALL - DAY

JONAS AND GABE BURST THROUGH THE SURFACE OF THE WATER, spitting and gasping. Their peaceful expressions are completely gone. GABE'S eyes are wild with fear, his tiny arms grasping JONAS around the neck, trying to stay afloat. JONAS looks around frantically.

They are almost directly under the waterfall. White, agitated waves roil around them as tons of water smash down nearby.

The current starts taking them downstream, away from the waterfall. As they float down the river, the sound of the fury recedes and is replaced by a new, strange sound of BIRDS in the trees and INSECTS in the air. The buzzing of a DRAGONFLY hovering just above the surface of the water draws GABE's attention. He looks with wonder at the sight of its iridescent wings blurred in flight. JONAS doesn't see the dragonfly.

EXT. ELSEWHERE RIVER, BEACH - DAY

The river curves and the boys are washed up onto a SMALL SANDY BEACH. A DARK, TALL FOREST looms just beyond the beach. They lie in the sun and catch their breath, sprawled on the warm sand.

SUDDENLY, GABE looks at the sky. JONAS follows his gaze and recoils in momentary fear -- A BLACK PLANE, high above them in the sky... Then he looks closer... NOT A PLANE, BUT A BIRD. He smiles.

JONAS

It's a bird, Gabe. It's a REAL
bird. A real animal. A real...
(He looks down at GABE.)
There could be more. So much more.

EXT. THE TRIANGLE - MORNING

FIONA and ASHER stand in the TRIANGLE.

ASHER

I guess he showed you this place.

FIONA nods.

FIONA

Have you ever wondered what would
happen if you stopped taking the
pills?

ASHER

What do you mean?

FIONA

If you *stopped*.

This has never occurred to ASHER. FIONA reaches into her bag and hands ASHER the book from JONAS.

ASHER

What is this?

FIONA

I don't know. But I think Jonas
wanted you to have it.

ASHER looks down at the book in his hands.

EXT. PRIMEVAL FOREST - DAY

JONAS is weak. He's exhausted. GABE is coughing. It is not only the distance and time that has weathered JONAS, it is also *the experience*, as though with the journey, he has been *drained*.

Pushing through the low-hanging claws of giant trees and the tangle of overgrown ferns, JONAS stumbles, almost tumbling forward with GABE. Here, deep in the of this black forest, the sound of the birds is almost deafening.

The branches shift and the roots feel almost lifelike, scraping at JONAS's legs. Just when it feels as though he will be pulled down, swallowed the forest, JONAS spills forward into an expansive FLAXEN MEADOW.

EXT. FLAXEN MEADOW - CONTINUOUS

Rising from the meadow is the IMMENSE RUSTED METAL WRECKAGE of a sort-of FINGER-LIKE WALL.

The twisted, rising beams look like RIBS OF A DEAD ANIMAL, sticking out of the overgrown vegetation. The METAL WRECKAGE curves around far into the distance of the MEADOW on both sides. JONAS recognizes these soaring ribs as THE OUTER BORDER OF **THE COMMUNITY** - **the outer bones of the society** that THE GIVER had shown JONAS on the ancient map what seems like ages ago.

A sudden movement catches JONAS's eye. By one of the soaring ribs, JONAS sees a CREATURE. It's a GIANT ELK. They all stare at each other, stunned. Neither of the three has ever seen another creature like that. Then with a shake of its huge antlers, the elk soundlessly DISAPPEARS back behind, JONAS and into the forest.

Was the creature signalling to JONAS? GABE in arms, JONAS walks to the METAL RIB where the ELK once stood. JONAS slowly puts a hand up to the METAL RIB.

CUT TO:

INT. LILY'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

STUDENTS sit, writing mathematical equations on glass surfaces with digital pens. Suddenly, LILY's hand begins to move. Amid the math, she has drawn the outline of an Elk. She doesn't know where it came from. But she sees it. And she smiles. Pulsing music begins to creep under.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLAXEN MEADOW - CONTINUOUS

JONAS is at the METAL RIB. He pulls his hand back. He opens his eyes. He feels that something has changed. He feels...lighter. As though memories...were being released.

He looks down at GABE. Then he looks ahead.

And he begins to run.

EXT. PRIMEVAL FOREST, SLOPE - LATER

FROM ABOVE: A tiny figure of the little boy, clutching another smaller boy, RELENTLESSLY MOVING UP THE MOUNTAIN.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESERVOIR - CONTINUOUS

FIONA stands by the edge of the RESERVOIR. The water is like glass. Suddenly, a burst of a memory floods to her and she takes a step back. Like ghosts on the surface of the water, FIONA sees:

An early 20th Century band. She hears no music, but she sees a beautiful white-gowned BRIDE gliding - *dancing* - with a GROOM. Her eyes go wide.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MOUNTAIN - LATER

The slope has become a mountain.

CLOSER: JONAS STUMBLES UPHILL, his feet dislodging small rocks which bounce and tumble down.

He carries GABE, exhaling white plumes in the frigid air with every labored breath. IT IS MUCH COLDER HERE. The trees are wind-torn, the rocks are more jagged.

It begins to SNOW, swirling large flakes. The trees and the ground are immediately dusted with white.

CUT TO:

INT. JET HANGER - CONTINUOUS

ASHER leans against his JET. He is leafing through the BOOK OF ILLUSTRATIONS. His brow is furrowed. He's confused. Slowly, the images start to quiver and COLOR starts to fill in the illustrations. ASHER's eyes lock on the rainbow. His jaw drops open.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - LATER

Higher and along a narrow path, JONAS clutches GABE tightly, losing strength, but trying to be brave. The pattern of whirling snow mirrors the whirling of the WATERFALL from the beginning of the film.

JONAS, snow in his hair and eyes, just looks ever upward. He takes a step.

CUT TO:

INT. JONAS'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

FATHER stands in JONAS's empty bedroom. He's looking at the vacant bed. Then, and without an apparent catalyst, he begins to hum. It is the GIVER'S THEME. The REAL music of the GIVER's THEME sneaks under, swelling.

MOTHER, passing through the hallway, stops at JONAS's door, looking in at FATHER. She hears the music too. She loses her footing, her hand reaching out to FATHER so she can find balance.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANGROVE FOREST - DAY - MEMORY

Warm sun shines through the brilliantly green leaves. JONAS and GABRIEL lie on their backs in a rowboat, looking up at the trees. Dappled sunlight warms their bodies, and shimmers with a million white sparkles on the surface of the water.

JONAS turns to look at GABE. There is sadness in his eyes.

JONAS
I can't hold it.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - EARLY EVENING

JONAS and GABE are in exactly the same positions -- but there is no rowboat, no trees, no warm sunshine. The million white sparkles on the water are replaced by a MAELSTROM OF WHITE.

THEY ARE IN A BLIZZARD.

The GIVER's THEME builds, louder and more powerful. It feels overwhelming - as though it could drown them out for good.

Hunched over, JONAS lifts GABE and examines him. GABRIEL's lips are blue and trembling. He shivers almost uncontrollably now. JONAS OPENS his jacket and HOLDS GABRIEL to his chest. GABRIEL whimpers against him.

JONAS
(With hoarse voice.)
It's called snow, Gabe.

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - CONTINUOUS

In the Chamber are floating screens displaying the life of an old man, THE GIVER. Yet, there are barely any photos. Just photos of THE GIVER when he was a young man, about JONAS's age. Back and back and back before THE GIVER was in the Ceremony of the Groan. Back in innocence and optimism.

In many chairs, some of them wheel chairs, are dozens of OLD MEN and WOMEN. Most are sleeping.

An ELDER stands at a podium, giving a speech (unheard). In a chair beside the podium, sits THE GIVER. He looks proud and excited.

Behind the ELDER and THE GIVER is an ENORMOUS STEEL DOOR...

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - LATER

JONAS struggles to his feet and continues up the ridge, his feet sinking into the deep snow with every tortured step. CLOSE on GABRIEL's eyes, closed against JONAS's chest. He is breathing heavily and unevenly.

JONAS

Stay awake, please. I'll try to warm us again, but...but I'm losing my memories. I don't know...I can't...They have fallen, somehow. But...stay awake, Gabriel. Stay with me.

JONAS takes GABE's freezing hands, concentrating desperately to conjure up anything. Any memory of warmth....

MONTAGE: FLICKERS, TINY SCRAPS OF MEMORIES, AS THEY FLASH AND CHANGE RAPIDLY -- FIRE IN THE HEARTH, SUNLIGHT, DESERT SAND WITH HEAT MIRAGE, ETC. But they are FLEETING, NOT LONG ENOUGH, WITH NOT ENOUGH STRENGTH TO WARM THE BOYS.

THEY STAND THERE HUGGING EACH OTHER IN THE BLINDING SNOW. After a time, JONAS WALKS ON, biting his lips with pain. Stumbling for a few steps, HE SLIPS AND FALLS TO HIS KNEES, THEN STANDS AGAIN AND KEEPS GOING.

He gasps for breath in the bitter cold, speaking to GABRIEL as a way to keep his mind off the pain.

JONAS (CONT'D)

I remember this place, Gabe. I don't know why, but I'm sure I do--

A few labored steps later, he croaks hoarsely.

JONAS (CONT'D)

We're almost there, Gabriel. Just up there, just a little farther.

And as he CRESTS THE TOP OF THE HILL... there, in the swirling snow, HE SEES, HIS VISION BLURRED BY THE BLIZZARD...

...THE SLED FROM THE MEMORY.

The same RED COLOR, the same ICE-ENCRUSTED ROPE, the same METAL RUNNERS.

The sled points downhill.

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - CONTINUOUS

The presentation has ended. The OLD from their chairs are chanting: BENJAMIN, BENJAMIN, BENJAMIN, BENJAMIN, BENJAMIN...

With two quivering arms, THE GIVER hoists himself to his feet. He's smiling.

Behind him, the STEEL DOOR swings open. LIGHT floods in, backlighting THE GIVER.

He turns to face the light. He begins to walk.

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS

JONAS'S face glows with surging emotions. He smiles, bends, and fumbles for the rope with frozen hands. He sits down on the sled, clutching GABRIEL to his chest.

JONAS
(With tears in his eyes.)
You are my brother.

JONAS looks down at GABRIEL, blue and barely moving. The tears on JONAS's cheeks are freezing.

JONAS (CONT'D)
And we have found it together.

And with these words, JONAS tips forward, DOWNHILL.

JONAS (CONT'D)
We have found... *Elsewhere.*

A HEAVE and JONAS and GABRIEL rocket DOWNHILL, down and down and down through the blizzard...

JONAS's blue eyes are wide open as the sled plummets faster and faster. GABRIEL looks up at JONAS with his blue eyes. THEIR GAZE LOCKS FOR AN INSTANT, THEN TURN TO LOOK AHEAD.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE-UP: THE GIVER's blue eyes go wide. The memory of the sled has found its way back to him. He stops walking. Quickly, two WORKERS come to THE GIVER's side, confused. They take him by the elbows, but THE GIVER digs his heels into the ground, unwilling to move. He's fighting back.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE DOWNWARD SLOPE - CONTINUOUS

And now, the snow and wind have STOPPED. The only sound is the HISS of the sled runners in the white silence.

AND THEN, QUIETLY AND FROM A DISTANCE - MUSIC. BUT IT IS BEING SUNG BY HUMAN VOICES.

A CHRISTMAS SONG - PERHAPS GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN.

INT. HOUSE OF THE OLD - CONTINUOUS

One-by-one, the OLD who had been dozing, awaken, their heads rising. They can hear the singing.

The WORKERS stop and let THE GIVER's elbows go. They hear the singing too.

THE GIVER, pride in his eyes, turns away from the STEEL DOOR and looks into the distance.

He remembers JONAS.

EXT. THE DOWNWARD SLOPE - CONTINUOUS

To this beautiful sound, the sled FLIES DOWN THE HILL in a straight line. A magical flight. This time, it goes FARTHER THAN IT HAS EVER GONE, even past the point where it has stopped before in JONAS's dream. Toward that SOMETHING JONAS almost saw before in the woods. That place where the voices are.

The sled comes to a gradual stop. IT IS STILL AND QUIET HERE.

We see what JONAS sees: A SMALL HOME STANDS IN THE WOODS. WINDOWS GLOW WITH WARM LIGHT, SMOKE RISES FROM THE CHIMNEY. THERE ARE RED, BLUE, AND YELLOW LIGHTS TWINKLING FROM WITHIN.

AND...THE MUSIC... PEOPLE SINGING SOFTLY INSIDE... A BEAUTIFUL MELODY FILLED WITH HOPE AND LOVE.

Weak as he has ever been, he manages to maneuver GABRIEL onto his back.

JONAS crawls forward off the sled, his elbows deep into snow. He is going only inches toward the HOME, but they are deliberate movements. GABRIEL's hand on JONAS's neck is only twitching a little. JONAS can barely move. But he's inching forward. With every last bit of who he is.

JONAS
(Barely heard.)
They're waiting for us.

The camera begins to pull back.

The smoke rises from the chimney, the colored lights sparkle, and the faint singing splits into harmony.

From above, we see JONAS lying in the snow, GABRIEL on his back. They are perhaps 30 feet from the house, but JONAS is crawling. He's crawling.

The camera rises and pulls away...

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER OVER BLACK: **"For all the children to whom we entrust our future."**

SUPER OVER BLACK: **"You are the receivers of our memories."**

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END