

Essay on The Giver: Critical Review of Book

Protagonist:

The protagonist is Jonas. He lives in a family of 4, which consists of himself, Lily, Father, and Mother. He will later meet a baby named Gabe, who has a matching trait with Jonas that is very unique. They both had pale blue eyes. His best friend was named Asher, and he was also close friends with a girl named Fiona. They were all 11s.

Antagonist:

I think that the antagonist in "The Giver" would have to be the society itself. I can't exactly explain it without going into the conflict so just look down a bit and my reasoning will show.

Conflict:

This took a lot of thinking about. I don't believe it's a man versus man conflict as much as a man versus outside force. Let me explain. Since I believe that the antagonist is the society, the rules, does that really count as a "man"? I think it would be considered an "outside force" and I don't believe that it's a man versus self. So I believe that it is a man versus outside force. I believe that society is the antagonist because the only reason that Jonas and the Giver work together to give the memories to everyone is because they don't agree with the rules. Jonas is able to convince the Giver that the rules were unfair and that they shouldn't have to go through what they do, AKA the memories. So they create a plan to give everyone the memories Jonas has received, involving the painful ones.

Setting:

There is no location for the setting, although what we do know is that there is Jonas's community, there is Elsewhere, and there are other communities, which is proven when Lily shares her first feelings in the book. Page 5-6 states "I felt very angry this afternoon.," Lily announced. "My Childcare group was at the play area, and we had a visiting group of Sevens, and they didn't obey the rules at all. One of them-a male: I don't know his name-kept going right to the front of the line for the slide, even though the rest of us were waiting. ...Our leader told us, when he made the welcome speech, but I can't remember, I guess I wasn't paying attention. It was from another community.

Plot:

This will be hard to explain if you don't know the way the community works, so I guess I'll start with that. The community has rules and if broken, punishment will vary from light chastisement to release. In this community, no one can see colors, and many emotions don't exist. For example, there is

happiness, but there is no love. There is sadness, but no depression. I guess there are just no amplified feelings in the Giver for normal people. There is no celebration for an individual's birthday. Let's say the year is 2005. If you were born on March 14, 2005, that isn't your birthday. It is more or less your birth year, although no one will keep track of that. When December 2005 rolls around, you will be assigned a name and family unit. A family unit will only get 2 children, a boy and a girl.

Ceremonies:

- Your first ceremony, or your naming ceremony, is when you are given a name and assigned a family unit.
- Ceremony of 3: Girls get their hair ribbons and they begin to dream tell. Proper language is learned.
- Ceremony of 4: Children are given jackets that have buttons on the back to teach interdependence.
- Ceremony of 7: Children are given jackets that have buttons on the front to show independence.
- Ceremony of 8: Children can start their volunteer hours, and they have their comfort object(stuffed animal) taken away. They also get jackets with pockets and smaller buttons.
- Ceremony of 9: Children are given bikes and more volunteer hours.
- Ceremony of 10: Boys are given haircuts and girls get braids.
- Ceremony of 11: Children get new undergarments, gender specific(for women), and some get long trousers.
- Ceremony of 12: Children are assigned/receive their assignment and they begin their training.

There are a bunch of other things that are kind of important but since you have to read around 100 book reports I don't want you spending 10 hours on this so I just hope you've read this book before or nothing will make sense. The story begins and it introduces our protagonist, Jonas. At the time of the first chapter, he is 11, and he is quite nervous about the fact that the ceremony of 12 is coming and he will soon be assigned. He wasn't frightened, but he was eager. Page 4 states "He had waited a long time for this special December. Now that it was almost upon him, he wasn't frightened, but he was...eager, he decided. He was eager for it to come. And he was excited, certainly. All of the Elevens were excited about the event that would be coming so soon. But there was a little shudder of nervousness when he thought about it, about what might happen. Apprehensive, Jonas decided. That's what I am." Next, his family was in their dwelling, sharing their feelings. Families have to do this every day at dinner and they have to tell the truth. His father talked about how he was worried that one of the newchildren, Gabriel, was not growing as fast or sleeping soundly. Eventually, Father ends up taking Gabriel home and Lily points out that Jonas that Gabriel has "funny eyes like yours, Jonas!" which is a reference to the fact that Jonas had a rare trait about him, the fact that he had lighter, pale eyes unlike the dark eyes everyone else in the community had. It is quite rare since only him, Garbiel, a 6 named Katherine, and the Giver had pale eyes. Jonas then went to the House Of The Old, where he found Asher's bike at. He went there to do some volunteer hours, and the attendant told him to join Asher and Fiona in the bathing room. The bathing room was where volunteers and Caretakers of the Old bathed the Old. This is also where Fiona spent most of her volunteer hours. Since the next important thing is coming up I figured I'd start a new paragraph to emphasize the importance. Jonas is now sharing his dreams, which he does in the morning. He told his family about what was called the "Stirrings" which happened to everyone at a certain age. He described his dream as wanting to give Fiona a bath instead of the old, but Fiona just kept laughing at him. Page 36 says "'I wanted her to take off her clothes and get into the tub," he explained quickly. "I wanted to bathe her. I had the

sponge in my hand. But she wouldn't. She kept laughing and saying no." His mother reveals that the treatment for the "Stirrings" was just a daily pill. This is pretty important because I believe this is why there is no love. I'm pretty sure that what Jonas is describing, what the dream was about, was Jonas's love for Fiona. But since he has to take the pill, he loses the stirrings and basically loses all his feelings for Fiona. The Ceremony of 12 finally comes around and Jonas was practicing his confident walk, but then the Chief Elder skipped him. Just went from number 18 to number 20, completely disregarding Jonas's existence. Eventually, at the very end, she apologizes for causing everyone to stress and calls Jonas up. She announces that Jonas wasn't assigned, and that he was selected. Selected to be the next receiver of memories, Jonas was selected as the highest honor in the community. It's said to be more of a duty than a job. Jonas goes to his first day as the Receiver Of Memory and meets the Giver. Or the old Receiver. He gives him memories of joy, but for the last memory of the day Jonas asks for a painful one, so the Giver gives him the memory of sunburn. Jonas is in pain but is grateful since now he knows what kind of pain he will go through during his training. Jonas does a lot more training, goes through a lot of pain that is worse than sunburn, and then learns something new. Another thing is that Jonas decided to stop taking his pills, to feel his love for Fiona again. In Jonas's rules for his assignment, it was said that he could not apply for release. But he learns that that wasn't always a rule. The Receiver before him, Rosemary, applied for release because she couldn't handle all the pain from the memories. So she applied for release and Jonas learns what it's like to be released. The Giver makes him watch a release of a baby, and Jonas watches in horror as his dad kills a baby with a shot. The Giver describes the pain he went through when Rosemary preferred to give herself the shot, and this hurt so much because Rosemary was the Giver's daughter. Jonas realizes that the community is not perfect. He works with the Giver to make a plan to escape. To make the community bear what Jonas had to go through, what the Giver had to go through, what all the Receivers had to go through. However, the plan did not go as expected. Jonas had left early for one reason and one reason only. When he got home, it was revealed that Gabe, who Jonas's entire family had known well and liked, was going to be released. Since Jonas had emotion since he stopped taking the pills, he felt love for Gabe. Since that one day with the Giver, he knew the true meaning of "release" and he didn't want that to happen. So he took his father's bike that had a child's seat in the back and he took Gabe with him. He ran away from the community, to Elsewhere, while planes searched everywhere for him. The book ends with Jonas going down a hill, a callback to his earliest memories, a combination of his first memory, sledding down a hill, and Jonas's favorite memory, Christmas. Climax: There is literally no climax in a story like this. In most man versus outside force there is but I can't exactly think of a climax for a book like the Giver, so just know that I'm rewording something I looked up on the internet that I agree with. That took a while. The climax I decided on is when Jonas is shown the baby's release. Since Jonas wanted to know what release was like so badly, the Giver showed it to him. The reason I think this would be the climax is because this is when Jonas decided to question everything seriously. There are times when he questions why he has to go through the pain, why it has to be just him, but he drops it. After this, he doesn't drop the fact that the community has flaws. He ends up running away just so they learn that they aren't running the community the right way. Denouement: I guess the denouement would be Jonas trying to run away. After learning what release was, Jonas convinces the Giver to help him escape, and the begin to think of a plan. Jonas wants the Giver to come with him, but I think this is one of the best quotes in the book. Page 156: "If I go with you, and together we take away all their protection from the memories, Jonas, the community will be left with no one to help them. They'll be thrown into chaos. They'll destroy themselves. I can't go." Even though the Giver agrees with Jonas, even though he wants to go, he can't leave knowing that everyone will suffer, and I think it's a perfect representation of the community not having emotion and the empathy that the Giver is showing.

Conclusion

The pills for the stirrings or injections in the movie isn't really all that important until you watch the movie, because then the importance of it is really shown in a quote. As the Giver says: "Feelings are just fleeting, on the surface. But emotions, they're very deep, primal, they linger." Feelings like happiness, sadness, and stuff like that really just doesn't leave that much. But emotions, or as I stated, an amplified feeling, they will linger with you, stay with you. Let's say you had a passion about music, you loved it more than anything, and you attended a performance with your school band, not playing in it, but being with people that have the same interests. Sure, it may make you happy at the time, but then imagine if you saw a performance from your favorite band with just your family. What are you going to remember more, the time you watched a performance from people you don't even know with friends or your favorite band?

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