

An analysis of lois lowry's the giver

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Set in a world where everything is plain and pre-determined, the Giver puts its readers in a series of unlikely events that we don't encounter in our everyday lives. A society that is perfect, yet disturbing where everything follows its own cycle so as to the lives of every individual. Everything is monitored; everything has its respective rules and must be obeyed. The novel can be read in a matter of hours but as to how the author, Lois Lowry, had managed to weave wonderful words to create a short but direct novel. The message can be interpreted by the in several ways based from how the reader perceives the plot of the story. The characters that can be easily attached to the readers because of the protagonist's wonder in his own world and will keep the reader's mind asking the same questions as the characters in the story.

THE HERO

Our protagonist is a kind of hero who had developed immensely in a short amount of time by committing a spiritual deed – in which, according to Joseph Campbell from the book *The Power of Myth* – where “...a child is compelled to give up its adulthood and become an adult” (Campbell, 152) by accepting the task that was given to him as “The Receiver of Memory” of the Community. As the story progresses, Jonas reached a point of illumination in which where the Giver has been transferring memories of the world to him. He did experienced things that the people of Community never did; happiness, sorrow, death, and love. The memories had served as a revelation to Jonas for him to see the bigger picture of his society and because of this, Jonas started to emerge out of the society's ways. When

Jonas had learned about the existence of colors, he began to realize that everyone in the Community is prevented to make their own choices.

They are restricted to do and choose “ what they think is right”—that could be wrong— and Jonas was once restricted to do the same unbeknownst to his consciousness, but the memories had revealed him this for him to jump into this conclusion. Still, because of these revelations, Jonas had lost some part of his childhood. That part where the children are playing a war game and these children don't know what it actually meant and for them, it is just a game. But Jonas had a different perspective; he was illuminated by the memories and knew that it is not just a game. It is a game of death that consumed the lives of several people in the past, and he knows how much he tries to explain it to them, they won't understand because they don't know how death feels like.

As Campbell says, “ Trials and revelations are what it is all about” (155). Jonas's transformation plays a great role in his act of heroism. His and the Giver's epiphany of setting things right and Jonas, fulfilling the hero's task, he decided to sacrifice himself for the Community. Though the ending of the book is quite ambiguous, he chose to save Gabriel from being released and took care of him along his journey to Elsewhere. His escape meant that the Community will be restored with the memories shared in each individual of the society—the act of selflessness. He had managed to be “ the Giver” of memories to the whole Community. “ The moral objective is that of saving a people, or saving a person, or supporting an idea. The hero sacrifices himself for something—that's the morality of it” (Campbell, 156). Jonas did save a person (Gabriel), and a group of people (the Community). There is no one

else who can and could have done the deed but Jonas. He is “selected” as the Receiver and he is the only able-bodied person who can tolerate more physical struggle that has that revelation and perform the act.

THE RITE OF PASSAGE

The Ceremony of Twelve in which Jonas and the other Twelves had experienced where they will start to receive their individual Assignments and will be the start of their training to prepare them to adulthood. They are given a new set of rules to be followed and are expected to do their jobs and work for the Community. For Jonas, however, takes the burden of the one that keeps the Community in order in which he has all the memories of the world. Only he can feel happiness, love, and sorrow and will continue to live by the suffering as the Giver had experienced.

The Community had traded peace and order for freedom and emotions and that they are all governed by what they are told to do. Their emotions are vague, and when Jonas asked his parents if they loved him, they only laughed and corrected him. They never knew the meaning of such emotions and it made him realize that they would never understand because they had never felt it. They don't have the memories. “MOYERS: Sometimes it seems to me that we ought to feel pity for the hero instead of admiration. So many of them have sacrificed their own needs for others.

MOYERS:

And very often, what they accomplish is shattered by the inability of the followers to see. CAMPBELL: Yes, you come out of the forest with the gold and it turns to ashes.” (Campbell, 164)

THE DRAGON

“ And if you simply do what your neighbors are telling you to do, you’re certainly going to be nailed down. Your neighbors are then your dragons as it reflects from within yourself” (Campbell, 184). Jonas as to what Campbell said, faced the same dragon and slays it the moment he took Gabriel out of Community. He had made his own choice. Free from the rules of the Community. He chose to save an untouched child away from Sameness and by doing so, makes him more human in a sense that he can now use his freedom of choice. And by going out of the Sameness, Jonas had experienced true love and sacrifice for Gabriel. He had protected the child up to his capabilities and started to care only about the health of the child. “ If you realize what the problem is—losing yourself, giving yourself to some higher end, or to another—you realize that this itself is the ultimate trial. When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness” (Campbell, 155).

The society he once lived in had never let him stop from fulfilling his task to share the memories to the society and by “ slaying the dragon”, Jonas had violated several rules that can result to terrible chastisements, but then, he knew what is right, what had to be done, and did it. He proved that he is now an individual that can make a change

THE AMBIGUOUS ENDING

It’s up to the readers to come up with the ending of the novel. There are two possible endings. Either Jonas and Gabriel survived and had gone to Elsewhere—which can be the most plausible and satisfying among most of

the people—or they could have both died and that Elsewhere is afterlife. The latter can be a bit unsatisfying because it portrays helplessness and will only justify what Jonas had said to the Giver, “ There’s nothing we can do. It’s always been this way. Before me, before you, before the ones who came before you. Back and back and back.” (Lowry, 154). Still, the ending is open to other conclusions but it seems it does not matter anymore. Jonas had fulfilled his task. He had given the Community the memories; he had freed himself from the rules of his society and created an individual out of himself. He had felt love, saved more than one life and formed a new society to his sacrifice. He had lived his life. “ You don’t understand death, you learn to acquiesce in death.” (Campbell, 187).