

# The GIVER

Lois Lowry's famous tale of a tragic future world—and the teen who risks his life to save it.

**ADAPTED  
BY SPENCER KAYDEN**

## CHARACTERS

Circle the character you will play.

\*Starred characters are major roles.

\***NARRATORS 1, 2 & 3** (N1, N2, N3)

**FIONA**, a 16-year-old girl

\***JONAS**, a 16-year-old boy

**MOTHER**, Jonas's mom

**FATHER**, Jonas's dad

**LILY**, Jonas's little sister

\***CHIEF ELDER**

**ALL**, to be read by the whole class

\***THE GIVER**, an old man

**SEEING BEYOND**

**HEARING BEYOND**

*Now a hit movie!*



ADAPTED FROM THE MOTION PICTURE *THE GIVER*. SCREENPLAY BY MICHAEL MITNICK AND ROBERT B. WEIDE. BASED ON THE NOVEL *THE GIVER*, WRITTEN BY LOIS LOWRY, PUBLISHED BY HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. COPYRIGHT ©2014 BY WALDEN MEDIA, LLC, AND ARC ENTERTAINMENT, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. USED BY PERMISSION.



## AS YOU READ, THINK ABOUT:

How can bad memories be important?

### Scene 1

**N1:** Jonas and Fiona ride their bikes down a perfectly **manicured** pathway.

**FIONA:** What Life Positions do you think we'll get?

**JONAS:** You're so good with newchildren, I'm sure you'll be a Nurturer.

**FIONA:** What about you?

**JONAS:** I don't think I fit anywhere.

**N2:** Jonas looks out at the dense wall of Mist that surrounds the Community.

**JONAS:** Do you ever wonder what Elsewhere is like?

**FIONA:** Why would I? The Community provides everything I need.

**JONAS:** But aren't you curious what's beyond the Mist?

**FIONA:** Questioning things is rude, Jonas.

### Scene 2

**N3:** Inside his dwelling, Jonas joins his Family Unit for dinner: premade food on metal trays.

**MOTHER:** It's time to share Feelings.

**FATHER:** There is a newchild in the nursery who is small and weak. It makes me feel . . . disappointed.

**LILY:** What will happen to it?

**FATHER:** If he doesn't grow, he will be Released to Elsewhere. Your turn, Jonas.

**JONAS:** Well, I guess I'm sort of . . . terrified.

**MOTHER:** Precision of language.

**JONAS:** I mean . . . anxious about the Ceremony.

**MOTHER:** The Elders will assign the right Life Position for you. They are never wrong.

### Scene 3

**N1:** The Community gathers in an amphitheater.

**CHIEF ELDER:** As you know, people once lived with suffering and **chaos**. Then came a solution: Communities, where disorder became harmony.

**ALL:** Harmony!

**CHIEF ELDER:** Now that the Old have been Released, it's time for the Ceremony of the Grown.

**N2:** Jonas and the other 16-year-olds file onto the stage.

**CHIEF ELDER:** Listen for your name. I will announce your Life Positions. (*clearing throat*) Madeline: Birth Mother.

Isaac: Instructor. Asher: Pilot. Fiona: Nurturer. Jonas . . .

**N3:** The Chief Elder pauses, and a look of confusion passes over Jonas's face.

**CHIEF ELDER:** Jonas . . . you have been chosen as our next Receiver of Memory.

**ALL** (*gasping*): Oh!

**N1:** The crowd begins to chant.

**ALL:** Jo-nas. Jo-nas. JO-NAS. JO-NAS!

### Scene 4

**N2:** The next day, Jonas rides to the current Receiver's dwelling, a strange stone building at the edge of the Mist.

**N3:** Inside, Jonas stares in awe at towering shelves of books. An old, bearded man watches him.

**GIVER:** These are your books now.

**JONAS** (*surprised*): In my dwelling, we have only a dictionary and the Community's Book of Rules. I didn't know other books existed.

**GIVER:** Books are forbidden.

**JONAS:** Why?

**GIVER:** Books introduce alternate ways of thinking.

**JONAS:** Then why does the Receiver have them?

**GIVER:** The Receiver holds all the memories of what life used to be like, and uses them to give advice in times of need. Sit down.

**N1:** Jonas sits in an old, worn chair.

**GIVER:** I will **transmit** to you the memories I hold within me. You will learn the secret history of the world—generations back when things were different. When there was *more*.

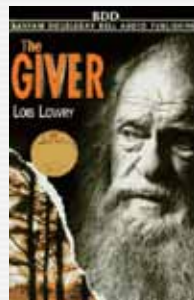
**JONAS:** More?

**GIVER:** Much more. Violins, bumblebees, purple, thunderstorms . . .

**JONAS:** What are those things?

**GIVER:** We got rid of them when we embraced Sameness.

**N2:** The Giver holds Jonas's wrists. A shock travels through Jonas's body.



Since *The Giver* was published in 1993, more than 10 million copies have been sold. Why do you think the story appeals to readers?

**SEEING BEYOND:** Suddenly, Jonas is standing alone in the woods. Plump, white snowflakes drift around him.

**HEARING BEYOND:** There is a CRUNCH as Jonas takes steps in the thick snow.

**N3:** Jonas's eyes snap open.

**JONAS:** What was that?

**GIVER:** It's called snow.

**JONAS:** Did my parents have snow? Did you?

**GIVER:** No. The weather here is always the same, always pleasant, because of climate control.

**JONAS:** Why?

**GIVER:** Snow is cold. It destroys crops, which brings hunger and starvation.

**N1:** Jonas thinks about this.

**JONAS:** If I'm the Receiver now, what are you?

**GIVER:** That must make me the Giver.

## Scene 5

**N2:** At Jonas's dwelling, Father holds a tiny baby.

**LILY:** Why does his name tag say "Uncertain"?

**MOTHER:** Newchildren are not given names until they are placed with a Family Unit.

**FATHER:** We're going to look after this little guy until he gets bigger. (*whispering*) Be strong, Gabriel, or we'll have to Release you.

**JONAS:** You looked at his name? Isn't that against the Rules?

**FATHER:** It is, but I thought having a name might help the little guy grow.

**N3:** Jonas reaches out. Gabriel wraps his tiny hand around Jonas's finger.

**JONAS** (*smiling*): Hey, Gabe.

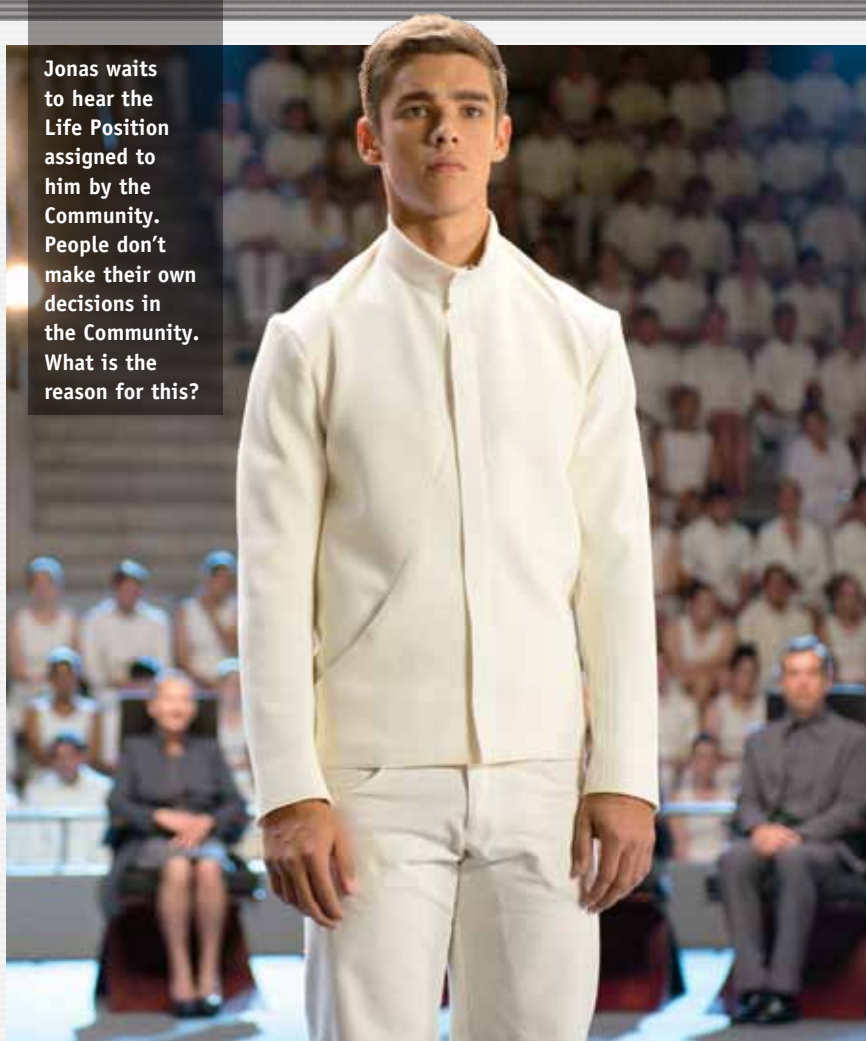
**MOTHER** (*sternly*): His name is "Uncertain."

## Scene 6

**N1:** Jonas's training continues.

**GIVER:** In the past, everything had a quality called *color*.

Jonas waits to hear the Life Position assigned to him by the Community. People don't make their own decisions in the Community. What is the reason for this?



**N2:** The Giver takes Jonas's wrists.

**SEEING BEYOND:** Jonas is on a crimson boat. In the distance are green forests; below, cobalt blue waters.

**JONAS** (*opening his eyes*): Whoa! Why don't we have colors anymore?

**GIVER:** We eliminated all differences. Differences can cause jealousy, anger, and hate.

**JONAS:** But colors are beautiful.

**GIVER:** We gained control of many things, but we had to let go of others.

**N3:** Jonas sees a map on the Giver's desk.

**JONAS:** What's this area beyond the Mist?

**GIVER:** It's the Boundary of Memory. Forbidden. Especially for you.

**JONAS:** Why?

**GIVER:** If the Receiver of Memory crosses that Boundary, your memories will be set free and return to the people.



## Scene 7

**N1:** One day, the Giver plays a lovely tune on a piano.  
**GIVER:** This is called music. Listen to what it calls from inside of you.  
**SEEING BEYOND:** Jonas is at a wedding—his wedding.  
**HEARING BEYOND:** He and the bride are dancing and laughing.  
**JONAS** (*opening his eyes*): My chest hurts, but . . . it's good.  
**GIVER:** That's called love.  
**JONAS:** Why would we get rid of love?  
**GIVER:** Because emotions can't be controlled. There's heartbreak. There's sorrow. (*taking Jonas's wrists*) I'll show you.  
**SEEING BEYOND:** A mother elephant feeds its baby in the windswept grasslands.  
**HEARING BEYOND:** Crack! Crack! Rifles shoot.  
**SEEING BEYOND:** The young elephant drops in agony.  
**HEARING BEYOND:** The mother roars with rage.  
**N2:** Jonas opens his eyes. They are wet with tears.  
**JONAS:** How can people be so cruel?  
**GIVER:** People make bad decisions. You can see why the Community wants to take away choices.  
**JONAS:** If there is neither good nor bad, what is there?  
**GIVER:** Good question.

## Scene 8

**N3:** Later, Jonas lies in the grass.  
**SEEING BEYOND:** He sees the light **penetrate** the bright green leaves of a tree.  
**N1:** Suddenly, Fiona is standing over him.  
**SEEING BEYOND:** Jonas can now see that Fiona's hair is bright red. But Fiona has no idea—she can see only in black and white.  
**FIONA:** Jonas? Jonas, have you fallen? Do you need Immediate Help?  
**JONAS:** No, I was just . . .  
**FIONA:** Why are you smiling like that?  
**JONAS:** The leaves . . . your hair . . .  
**FIONA:** What is going on with you?  
**N2:** Jonas stands up and seizes Fiona's hands.  
**JONAS:** Fiona, there is so much more to life!  
**N3:** He begins to sing and spin Fiona around.



Is sacrificing color, music, and love for a safe and peaceful society worth it?

**FIONA** (*giggling*): What are we doing?  
**N1:** He twirls Fiona faster and faster, until they fall down, laughing.  
**N2:** A loud voice **emanates** from a nearby speaker.  
**CHIEF ELDER:** Warning Issued: Fiona.  
**FIONA** (*shocked*): You got me in trouble, Jonas!  
**N3:** She runs off.  
**JONAS** (*quietly*): It's called dancing.

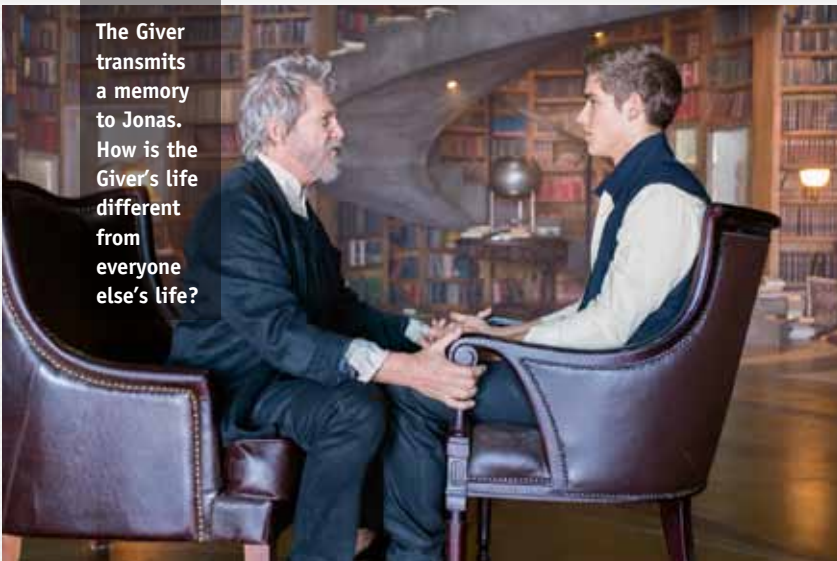
## Scene 9

**N1:** The Chief Elder summons the Giver.  
**CHIEF ELDER:** Jonas is **corrupting** his friends and questioning Sameness.  
**GIVER:** The Receiver's job is to question everything.  
**CHIEF ELDER:** No, the Receiver's job is to hold in all the pleasure and pain. This is what keeps our people safe and content. If Jonas continues to break the Rules, we will have to find a new Receiver.  
**GIVER:** And what . . . Release Jonas?  
**CHIEF ELDER:** If it comes to that.

## Scene 10

**N2:** As the months go by, Jonas receives memories of skyscrapers, dinosaur skulls, and many other wonders.  
**N3:** He also learns of war and destruction and loss.  
**GIVER:** Tell me if any of this proves too much for you.  
**JONAS:** I want to know everything.  
**N1:** The Giver pushes a button on the wall.  
**GIVER:** Show this morning's Release.  
**N2:** A screen appears. Jonas's father is placing twin babies on side-by-side scales.  
**FATHER:** OK, who's my chubby champion?  
**N3:** The scales read 300 and 301. Father's assistant takes away the heavier baby.  
**FATHER:** And you, Mr. One Unit Less: Bye-bye, little guy.  
**N1:** Father inserts a syringe into the baby's head and presses down. The squirming baby goes still.  
**JONAS:** That is what it means to "Release"? He killed that baby!  
**GIVER:** He doesn't know what "killed" means. You and I are the only ones who can understand.  
**JONAS:** Then it's OUR fault. People need

The Giver transmits a memory to Jonas. How is the Giver's life different from everyone else's life?



the memories so they can understand. Because if you can't feel, what's the point of life?

## Scene 11

**N2:** Jonas and his Family Unit are having dinner.

Father feeds baby Gabriel.

**FATHER:** Enjoy it, baby Gaby. This is your last night here.

**JONAS:** What do you mean?

**MOTHER:** Uncertain failed his Growing Test.

**FATHER:** I'll have to Release the little guy to Elsewhere.

**JONAS:** Release him? When?

**FATHER:** Tomorrow morning.

**N3:** Late that night, Jonas loads his backpack. He grabs Gabriel and attaches a baby carrier to his bicycle.

**N1:** Jonas rides to the Giver's dwelling.

**JONAS:** They're going to kill Gabe tomorrow. I'm leaving tonight, and I'm taking him with me. I need to find the Boundary of Memory—and cross it.

**GIVER:** The Boundary is far away. And you're not ready.

**JONAS:** Come with me.

**GIVER:** If the memories are released, chaos will return. I must stay to help the Community.

**N2:** The Giver grabs Jonas's wrists.

**SEEING BEYOND:** Images flash of a man crossing a vast desert, a woman swimming through a mighty river.

**HEARING BEYOND:** Jonas hears a long-distance runner's footsteps pounding against gravel.

**GIVER:** These memories will give you courage.

**N3:** Jonas's face is awash with emotion as the Giver hands him the map.

**GIVER:** I love you, Jonas. Now go.

## Scene 12

**N1:** Jonas takes baby Gabriel and hops on his bike.

**N2:** The Chief Elder's voice booms over the speakers.

**CHIEF ELDER:** Find the Receiver-in-Training!

**N3:** Jonas pedals faster, dodging searchlights. The Chief Elder watches on a monitor.

**CHIEF ELDER:** There's nowhere to hide, Jonas. We have cameras everywhere.

**JONAS:** Hold on, Gabe.

**N1:** Jonas speeds toward the wall of Mist and punches through it, disappearing from sight.

**CHIEF ELDER (shocked):** Release the drone planes!

**N2:** The Chief Elder storms into the Giver's dwelling.

**CHIEF ELDER:** You gave him that map, didn't you?

**GIVER:** I made it available. Jonas made the decision to restore people's freedom.

**CHIEF ELDER:** Freedom? Imagine if we let people choose their spouse, their food, their job. They would choose wrong every single time.

**GIVER:** But we have stolen life from people. We are distant whispers of what once made us human.

**CHIEF ELDER:** We will find Jonas and we will stop him.

## Scene 13

**N3:** Jonas, now on foot, clutches Gabriel as he struggles up a mountain. The hum of planes gets closer.

**N1:** Snowflakes begin to fall from the sky.

**JONAS:** We're almost there, Gabe.

**SEEING BEYOND:** At the top, Jonas sees a bright-red sled. He climbs on with Gabriel and pushes off.

**HEARING BEYOND:** Whoosh! The sled picks up speed.

**N2:** Jonas wraps his arms around Gabriel. They rocket past the Boundary of Memory.

**N3:** Back in the Community, Father pauses. He cannot bring himself to Release the baby smiling up at him.

**N1:** Lily, at school, begins to hum a tune.

**N2:** And Fiona opens her arms and begins to dance. ●



# Could *The Giver* Happen in Real Life?

Scientists say that erasing bad memories could soon become a reality.

By Jennifer Dignan



The futuristic world of *The Giver* is pretty terrifying. People see in black and white, no one falls in love, and everyone is expected to dress and behave in the same way. Perhaps most terrifying of all is that memories have been erased.

That got us thinking: Could memories be erased in real life?

The answer might surprise you. Erasing memories is swiftly moving out of the world of science fiction into the world of science fact. A team of scientists at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore recently discovered a chemical that can permanently delete the memory of a traumatic event.

So far, the chemical has been tested only in mice. But it is quite possible that one day, a memory-erasing drug for humans might be developed.

Think for a moment about the worst thing that has ever happened to you. If you could take a pill and erase that memory forever, would you?

## Forget About It

We all have bad memories. But some people have memories that are so horrible that they interfere

with their lives. Soldiers who have witnessed war and victims of violent crime, for example, can be tormented by their memories. They may develop post-traumatic stress disorder, a disease that causes severe anxiety, flashbacks, nightmares, anger, or depression. Learning to cope with such debilitating memories can take years of treatment, and some people never recover from their experiences.

For them, the ability to erase a memory could be truly lifesaving. “Erasing a memory and then everything bad built on that is an amazing idea,” says Kate Farinholt, director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maryland.

## It’s a Little Scary

Yet there are serious problems with the idea of erasing memories. “Completely deleting a memory . . . is a little scary,” says Farinholt. “How do you remove a memory without removing a whole part of someone’s life?”

Our experiences—the bad as well as the good—make us who we are. Each one helps

us grow. Would losing a memory take away the wisdom gained from that experience? Would we become less compassionate? Less kind? Simply put, would erasing memories change who we are?

There are other concerns as well. What if, as one memory is erased, others are accidentally deleted? What if the pills were to fall into the wrong hands? Could crime victims be forced to take the drug to stop them from talking to the police? Would people act differently if they knew that they wouldn’t have to remember what they did?

Finally, where would we draw the line between a memory that is bad enough to erase and one that isn’t—and who would get to draw that line?

No one is suggesting that memory-erasing pills be sold on store shelves like aspirin. The idea is that doctors would prescribe these pills only to those who are truly crippled by their terrible experiences.

In the debate over memory-erasing drugs, at least one thing is for sure: There’s a lot to keep in mind. ●

## WRITING CONTEST

Imagine that Jonas has time-traveled to the present-day United States. A memory-erasing drug has just been developed. Write a short editorial, as Jonas, explaining his opinion about this drug. Send it to **THE GIVER CONTEST**. Five winners will get *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. See page 2 for details.



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