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# The Giver

adapted for the stage by Brian Guehring  
from the Newberry Award winning novel by Lois Lowry  
a play for a minimum of 3m/3f

Draft # 3.60 a 60 minute post production draft

Jonas lives in a world where there is no fear, pain, war or choices. Nothing is ever unexpected, inconvenient or unusual. Everything is under control and every person is assigned a role in the community. His father takes care of newborns before they are assigned to a family unit. His mother gives punishment when anyone dares to disobey the rules of the community. When Jonas turns twelve, he is singled out to receive special training from the Giver. The Giver holds all the memories of true pain and pleasure of life. Now it's time for Jonas to receive the truth. There is no turning back.

The Giver will be produced by the 2008 Omaha Theater Company mainstage production for school groups and public audiences in the fall of 2008 and ran 65 minutes. The original cast and production team were:

## CAST

Chris Sheard	JONAS
Jim Hoggatt	GIVER/ASHER
Brian Guehring	FATHER/MEMORY SOLDIER/MEMORY GRANDPA
Erin Bragg	MOTHER/MEMORY GRANDMA
Mari Martinez	LILY/CHIEF ELDER/MEMORY MOM
Kirsten Davis	FIONA

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Director: Kevin Ehrhart	Set Designer: Will Davis
Costume Designer: Sherri Geerdes	Light Designer : Michael Arch
Stage Manager: Suzanne Withem	Development Dramaturg: Michael Miller

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# The Giver

a play for a minimum of 3 men/2 women

## Character List

JONAS	12 year old who is selected to be the Receiver of Memory
GIVER	Elder of community who holds all memories
FATHER	Jonas's father, a child caregiver
MOTHER	Jonas's mother, a judge
LILY	his nine year old sister
ASHER	his silly best friend
FIONA	His thoughtful, caring friend
GABRIEL*	a baby who needs extra care
SPEAKER	recorded voice that reminds the Community of the rules
CHIEF ELDER	the ruler of this community
MEMORIES	people in the memories Jonas receives MEMORY SOLDIER, MEMORY DAD, MEMORY MOM, MEMORY GRANDMOTHER, MEMORY GRANDFATHER

*\*Gabriel is envisioned to be a doll or simple puppet*

## Settings

Jonas's family dwelling unit  
recreation field  
the Giver's room  
the auditorium  
a snowy hill with a sled

## Time

One year: December through December  
in the future

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Scene 1: The Pilot

(PLAY opens with FIONA, LILY, JONAS and ASHER running around the recreation field. Their bikes are lined up in precise order. All of the children are wearing white tunics. In fact, the entire scene is in shades of white, gray and black. JONAS and ASHER have the same hairstyle. LILY's hair is in pig-tails with ribbons. Everyone's hair is black. The children are playing battle and all having a great fun time. Every outdoor scene has the same nice weather. There are never any animal sounds or music. The only sounds in the Community are electronic and mechanical)

LILY

Blam! Blam!

ASHER

Pssheeeewww! You're in my line of ambush, Jonas. Watch out!  
(JONAS ducks)

LILY

You got me!  
(LILY dramatically clutches her stomach and stumbles giggling)

FIONA

Counter-Attack! Pow! Pow!  
(FIONA runs towards the boys)

JONAS

You got me!  
(JONAS dramatically clutches his stomach and stumbles giggling. All laugh at him A Plane flies overhead.)

FIONA

That's odd. It's against the rules for a Pilot to fly over the Community.

SPEAKER (recorded)

ATTENTION. ALL CITIZENS SHOULD GO INTO THE NEAREST BUILDING. IMMEDIATELY.

(FIONA, JONAS and ASHER begin to go to their bikes)

LEAVE YOUR BICYCLES WHERE THEY ARE.

(CHILDREN all run into JONAS's family dwelling unit. MOTHER and FATHER greet them. MOTHER and FATHER are also wearing white tunics. Their hairstyles are the same as all other adults in the play)

FATHER

Hurry, children! Duck down.

*(PARENTS and CHILDREN wait for an uncomfortable moment)*

ASHER *(panicking)*

That was a jet, wasn't it? Why was it over the Community?

LILY

I'm frightened.

MOTHER

I'm sure the pilot just made a mistake. Asher, let's wait until we hear from the Speaker before we scare others.

*(FATHER, MOTHER and CHILDREN wait for another moment)*

SPEAKER *(recorded)*

ATTENTION. THE PILOT-IN-TRAINING MADE A WRONG TURN. NEEDLESS TO SAY, SHE WILL BE RELEASED. CITIZENS MAY NOW RETURN TO THEIR ACTIVITIES.

ASHER

I apologize for frightening you Lily.

LILY

I accept your apology, Asher.

FATHER

Fiona and Asher, you better ride to your dwelling units. It's dinner time.

FIONA

Of course. See you tomorrow at the building of learning, Jonas.

ASHER

Bye.

*(ASHER and FIONA leave the house, pick up their bikes and exit)*

LILY

What did the Food Deliverers bring for dinner?

*(JONAS goes to wash his hands. MOTHER and FATHER are setting the table. Everything in the house is plain & white )*

MOTHER

Why don't you wash up for dinner first?

*(LILY goes to wash her hands. JONAS finishes setting the table as they all sit down. LILY takes her place at the table)*

FATHER

Today is Monday, Lilly. So we are having vegetable pie.

*(FATHER brings a colorless dish of colorless food to the table)*

MOTHER

Jonas, would you like to be the first for the evening sharing of feelings?

LILY

I want to go first!

JONAS

Lily can go first.

*(LILY steps to the head of the table as other begin serving and eating dinner.)*

LILY

I felt very angry this afternoon. 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 kept going right to the front of the line for the slide, even though the rest of us were waiting. I felt so angry at him. I made my hand into a fist, like this.

*(LILY holds up a clenched fist. Her family smiles)*

MOTHER

Why do you think the visitors didn't obey the rules?

LILY

I don't know. They acted like...like.....

JONAS

Animals?

*(JONAS laughs. FATHER and MOTHER giggle)*

LILY

What's an animal?

FATHER

Animal is an old word that is often used to describe someone uneducated or clumsy.

MOTHER

Someone who doesn't fit in.

LILY

Then, yes. Like animals.

FATHER

I'm thinking about the boy who didn't obey the rules today. Do you think it's possible that he felt strange and stupid being in a new place with rules that he didn't know about?

LILY

Yes.

JONAS

I feel a little sorry for him.

FATHER

How do you feel now, Lily? Still angry?

LILY

I guess not. I guess I feel a little sorry for him. And sorry I made a fist.  
*(LILY sits down to eat.)*

FATHER, MOTHER and JONAS

Thank you for sharing your feelings, Lily.

MOTHER

Lily, why don't you pick whose turn it is next?

LILY

Father, you can go next.

*(FATHER stands and goes to head of table)*

FATHER

I am feeling worry. One of the newchildren isn't doing well. He's a sweet little male with a lovely disposition. But he doesn't sleep soundly. We have him in the extra care section for supplementary nurturing, but the committee's beginning to talk about releasing him.

LILY

Releasing him to Elsewhere?

FATHER

Yes.

MOTHER

Oh, no. I know how sad that must make you feel.

LILY

And he hasn't even done anything wrong.

FATHER

As a Nurturer, I feel like I've failed him somehow. But, I'm going to keep trying. I have asked the committee to allow me to bring him here at night for some extra attention.

MOTHER

Of course.

LILY

Maybe we could even keep him.

MOTHER

Lily, you know the rules.

LILY

I know. Two children- one male and one female- to each family unit. But I thought maybe just this once they could make an exception to the rules....

*(ALL giggle and FATHER sits)*

JONAS, MOTHER and LILY

Thank you for sharing your feelings, Father.

FATHER

Mother, would you like to go next?

*(MOTHER moves to the sharing spot)*

MOTHER

I am feeling frustrated and guilty. A repeat offender was brought before me. Someone who I hoped had been adequately and fairly punished. To see him brought before me a second time makes me feel like I hadn't made a difference in his life.

LILY

I'm sure you did, Mother.

MOTHER

But not enough. I'm also frightened for him. The rules say that if there's a third transgression, he simply has to be released.

*(LILY stands up and goes to mother and strokes her arm. FATHER takes her hand. JONAS stands up and takes her other.)*

MOTHER

Thank you. I feel soothed.

*(MOTHER sits down at the table again)*

JONAS, LILY and FATHER

Thank you for sharing your feelings, Mother.

MOTHER

Jonas, you're last tonight.

*(JONAS takes his place at the sharing space)*

JONAS

I'm feeling apprehensive.

FATHER

Why is that, son?

JONAS

I know that there's really nothing to worry about and that every adult has been through it. But it's the Ceremony that I'm apprehensive about. It's almost December.

LILY *(in an awed voice)*

The Ceremony of Twelve.

*(MOTHER and FATHER look at each other)*

MOTHER and FATHER

Thank you for sharing your feelings, Jonas.

MOTHER

Lily, go on now and get into your nightclothes. Father and I are going to stay here and talk to Jonas for a while.

LILY

Privately?

MOTHER

Yes. This talk will be a private one with Jonas.

*(LILY exits)*

FATHER

You know every December was exciting to me when I was young.

MOTHER

Seeing the newchildren get their names and family assignments and become a One.

JONAS

I was a Five when we got Lily.

FATHER

And it is very exciting when you become a Nine and are allowed to ride a bicycle.

JONAS

I already knew how to ride a bike when I became a Nine.

MOTHER

Yes. That is one of the few rules that is not taken seriously. Almost everyone knows how to ride a bike before they become a Nine.

JONAS

Why don't they change the rule and give bicycles at an earlier age?

FATHER

A committee is studying that.

MOTHER

The committee members will become Elders by the time they make a decision.

JONAS

....And the rule still won't be changed.

MOTHER

Rules are very hard to change.

FATHER

But the most exciting year is the Ceremony of Twelve. I remember how proud my parents looked - and my sister, too. But to be honest, Jonas, for me there was not the element of suspense that there is with your Ceremony. I was already fairly certain of what my Assignment was to be.

JONAS

But there's no way to know in advance. It's a secret selection made by the Committee of Elders.

MOTHER

How could you have known?

FATHER

It was clear to me what my aptitude was. I love playing with newchildren more than anything. Almost all of my volunteer hours were helping in the Nurturing Center.

MOTHER

And the Elders knew that, from their observation.

FATHER

So I was pleased, but not surprised, when my Assignment was announced as Nurturer.

JONAS

Were any of the Elevens disappointed, your year?

FATHER

I don't think so. Of course the Elders are so careful in their observation and selections.

*(LILY appears in her nightclothes)*

LILY

This is certainly a long private conversation. And there are certain people waiting for their comfort object.

MOTHER

Lily, you're very close to being an Eight, and when you're an Eight, your comfort object will be taken away. You should be starting to go off to sleep without it.

*(FATHER has already taken down the stuffed elephant from the shelf though)*

FATHER

Here you are, Lily-billy. I'll come help you remove your hair ribbons.

*(FATHER exits with LILY)*

MOTHER

Are you reassured, Jonas?

JONAS

Yes.....but I still haven't the slightest idea what my Assignment will be.

SPEAKER *(recorded)*

ANNOUNCEMENT: THIS IS A REMINDER TO ALL ELEVENs THAT THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE CEREMONY OF TWELVE. IF THERE IS ANY CONFUSION, YOU MAY CHECK PAGES 765 through 789 IN THE BOOK OF RULES IN YOUR FAMILY DWELLING UNIT.

*(A Bell rings. ASHER, FIONA and JONAS are on the recreation field. ASHER goes to the snack basket to grab a snack)*

ASHER

I thought learning lessons would never end. I'm starving.

FIONA

Watch your language, Asher! Are you really starving?

ASHER

No. I'm just really hungry.

FIONA

Then use precise language.

ASHER

I'm glad it is snack time. Because I am very hungry.

FIONA

Better.

*(ASHER finally can start eating his snack)*

JONAS

Maybe they will assign you to be a teacher, Fiona.

FIONA

That would be nice. What do you want your assignment to be, Jonas?

JONAS

I have no idea.

ASHER

Me either. Let's play a game.

JONAS

Let's play catch.

*(JONAS grabs a grey apple)*

Again?  
ASHER

It is good for your hand eye coordination, Asher. You should work on that.  
FIONA

You will be a teacher, Fiona.  
ASHER

What are we going to play with?  
FIONA

An apple.  
JONAS  
*(JONAS throws a grey apple to FIONA)*

I'm going to the House of the Old today for my volunteer hours. Do you want to come with me Jonas?  
FIONA  
*(FIONA throws grey apple to JONAS)*

Sure.  
JONAS  
*(The apple that ASHER throws to FIONA is red. JONAS stares at it.)*

Did you see that?  
JONAS

See what?  
FIONA

Does anything seem strange to you about the apple?  
JONAS  
*(FIONA holds up the apple and throws it to ASHER, who drops it)*

Yes, it jumps out of my hand onto the ground.  
ASHER  
*(ASHER throws a grey apple to JONAS)*

Jonas, are you feeling alright? Do you need to take a pill?  
FIONA  
*(JONAS examines grey apple)*

JONAS

No. I feel fine.

*(JONAS throws the grey apple)*

FIONA

Well I think there is going to be a releasing today at the House of Old.

ASHER

Do you get to watch?

JONAS

No. Children aren't allowed in the Releasing room.

FIONA

But I am sure the Old will tell me all about it.

*(The apple turns red again)*

JONAS

There! Look. The apple changed.

*(ASHER looks at red apple)*

ASHER

Oh, look, there is a small bruise on it. I didn't notice that.

*(ASHER throws the apple)*

FIONA

Maybe you will get the Assignment of Pilot. They need great eyesight.

*(JONAS has the apple and is staring at it)*

FIONA

Don't worry about your Assignment, Jonas. The Elders have been observing you. They see everything. They will give you the right assignment.

ASHER

I heard about a guy who was absolutely certain he was going to be assigned Engineer, and instead they gave him Sanitation Laborer. He went out the next day, jumped into the river, swam across, and joined the next community he came to. Nobody ever saw him again.

JONAS

Somebody made that story up, Ash. My father said he heard that story when he was a Twelve.

ASHER

I can't even swim well. My swimming instructor said that I don't have the right boyishness.

Buoyancy.

FIONA

Whatever. I don't have it. I sink.

ASHER

FIONA

Have you ever known somebody for sure- not just heard a story about- who joined another community?

ASHER

No. But you can. If you don't fit in, you can apply for Elsewhere and be released.  
*(Bell rings)*

Break time is over.

FIONA

The community is so meticulously ordered. How could someone not fit in?  
*(ASHER and FIONA leave.)*

JONAS

What if they saw things other people didn't? Like an apple changing.  
*(JONAS looks around and pockets the apple and exits)*