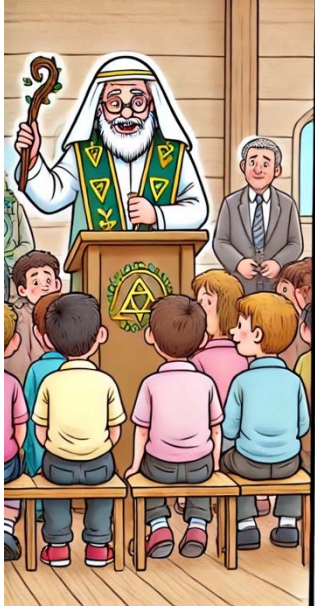


Name _____



Choosing Futures

In Jonas's community, everything was carefully planned. No one had to make big decisions about their life. From birth, children were assigned families, and at the age of twelve, they were given their permanent jobs. This important event was called the Ceremony of Twelve.

Jonas and his classmates had been waiting for this ceremony their whole lives. It was the moment when they would learn what jobs they would do forever. Some would be doctors, others

would be laborers, and a few would be nurturers who cared for newborns. The Committee of Elders observed each child carefully over the years and assigned them jobs based on their talents and interests. This meant that no one had to struggle with difficult decisions, and every job was chosen to fit each person perfectly.

At the Ceremony, Jonas sat nervously with the other Elevens, waiting for his number to be called. One by one, his classmates stepped forward to receive their Assignments. Each person accepted their job without question because they trusted the system. But when it was Jonas's turn, something unusual happened. The Chief Elder skipped his number. Jonas sat in shock as the ceremony continued without him. Then, at the end, the Elder finally addressed him. Jonas had been selected, not assigned, to be the Receiver of Memory—a rare and honored position.

The Ceremony of Twelve showed the true values of Jonas's community. It was designed to keep life predictable and free of choice. People did not pick their own futures; they simply accepted what was given to them. The community believed that eliminating choice prevented mistakes and unhappiness. But Jonas's selection as the Receiver of Memory made him wonder—was it really better to live in a world without choices?

As Jonas began his training, he started to see that his community's way of life came with a cost. By controlling people's futures, the community had taken away their freedom. The Ceremony of Twelve made sure that everyone had a place, but it also made sure that no one could choose their own path.