

Name _____



Safe but Empty

Jonas had always believed his community was perfect. There was no war, no pain, and no fear. Everyone was safe, well-fed, and lived in an orderly world where nothing unexpected happened. People didn't feel strong emotions like love or anger, but they also didn't feel pain or sadness. Life was calm and peaceful.

When Jonas was chosen to be the Receiver of Memory, he began to see what had been taken away from his world. The Giver transferred memories of the past—things no one else in the community could remember. Jonas experienced the joy of a birthday party, the excitement of sledding down a snowy hill, and the warmth of sunshine. These were feelings his community had erased in order to keep life controlled.

But Jonas also saw painful memories. He felt hunger, loss, and deep sadness. He saw war and suffering. It was difficult to carry these memories, but they helped him understand something important. By removing pain and fear, the community had also removed happiness and love. No one cried, but no one truly laughed. No one was hurt, but no one felt true joy. People existed, but they weren't really living.

Jonas realized that without emotions and choices, people were like machines, simply following rules. His parents did not love him—not because they were mean, but because they didn't know what love was. People did their jobs because they were assigned to them, not because they were passionate about them. Babies were taken from birth mothers and placed in families chosen for them. There were no real families, just groups of people living together.

At first, Jonas thought his world was safe and perfect. But now he saw that safety had a cost. His community had given up everything that made life meaningful.

Jonas had to make a choice. Would he stay in this world, where there was no pain but also no real happiness? Or would he leave and risk everything to find a life where people could truly feel?