

"The Giver" by Lois Lowry has been the most influential book I have read. I have read it multiple times and every time it has a different meaning. "The Giver" talks about a world of sameness. In this community every member is very similar to the other. They live in a protected world; things like hunger, loss, poverty, war, or even true love are unimaginable. The main character, Jonas, is about to turn twelve. Twelve is a very important age because that is when every "eleven" is given their assignment. No eleven chooses their assignment rather it is chosen for them by the "Elders" of the community. Jonas is honored with the "Receiver of Memory" assignment. No one in the community really knows what this assignment entails. There is only one receiver of memory and that individual leads a very solitude life. The first receiver of memory must give Jonas all the memories of the world one by one. Jonas must then keep these memories to himself and if the community is faced with an unknown problem Jonas is obliged to give them advise by using these memories. He is given good memories along with bad ones. Good memories consist of sailing on a sunny day, sledding down a hill, and feeling the love of a real family. Bad memories are the ones that bring Jonas physical pain, they make living in sameness all the more difficult. Some bad memories are war, breaking a bone, and a mother watching her child die. After a year of receiving memories Jonas decides he wants to change sameness and go back to how the world once was. "The Giver" talks about how one should not underestimate the value of being able to choose how you live your life.

Living in a world of sameness seems to be ideal; we can live in peace and tranquility. Wars, famine, death, starvation, or even discrimination are unknown. Who wouldn't want to live in a world like that? At first, I thought everyone would jump at the chance. But there are always sacrifices we aren't so willing to make. Along with living without horrible tragedies, we

would have to let go of some of the joys as well. We would have to sacrifice choices and deep feelings. If we were to live in the world of sameness as in the "The Giver", we wouldn't be able to choose our own spouse or if we want children. Our careers would be assigned, not chosen. There would be no individual celebrations; birthdays will be celebrated as a unit of fifty. Discrimination would be a thing of the past, everyone would be the same, and so individuality is also left in the dust. Considering the beauties we have to give up, the question is no longer who *wouldn't* want to live in a world like that but who *would* want to live in a world like that? It seems selfish to keep the joys with the anguish rather than sacrifice personal joy for the greater good.

The hardest sacrifice I would have to make if I lived in sameness would be giving up my freedom of choice and my freedom to have my own feelings. I take pride in being able to choose what college I will attend, what major I want to study, and what company I wish to work for. I don't think I could have a spouse chosen for me and live with this person for the rest of my life. There would be so much that I would lose by not being able to choose. There would be no awkward first date, no first kiss, no meeting the parents, and definitely no proposal. Everyone struggles with making the right choices and sometimes wish they didn't have to make decisions. But if we gave away all our power of choice we would no longer be independent individuals. We would depend on our community for everything.

Another sacrifice that is equally difficult to give up would be the ability to have deep feelings. I could never give up love. The love of a family is one of the best feelings people will ever experience. In "The Giver" there are family units but they aren't a real family. Jonas at one

point asks his parents if they love him and they just tell him that the word love has no meaning. These family units treat each other more like acquaintances than family. How can you replace the feeling of starting your own family? The feeling of fear, will I be a good parent? Will my children love me? Feeling the joy when they are born, holding your newborn baby for the first time. In sameness all of these feelings are imaginary. They are also no animals in sameness either, so people wouldn't ever feel the bonding or love of a pet as your best friend.

After reading "The Giver" I always begin thinking of how my world would be affected by sameness. I find myself appreciating the life I do have more so. I take my dog out for walks and look at my surroundings appreciating being able to see different vibrant colors instead of grayscale like in sameness. I am more grateful of being able to read whatever book I wish with no one telling me it's against the rules. In sameness the "elders" chose the life for the community because they thought it was the best way to live. I don't think I would ever want to live somewhere that's so routine, so blind. Whenever I imagine myself living like that, seeing what happens, I begin to love what I have more. Every time I realize that I'm starting to take what I have for granted I reread "The Giver" and it puts my life back in its proper perspective.