## Symbolism in The Giver

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| 1. Color Red | • Shows Jonas as separate from community because he can see the color  
• Shows strong emotions – love, hate | • Apple toss with Asher – shows Jonas’ ability to see as a separation between friends  
• Fiona’s hair – symbolizes Jonas’ desire to feel emotions  
• The Giver’s books – shows wisdom denied to the community  
• Lights on the house in Elsewhere – shows ideas of freedom/escape | Color is necessary to illustrate Jonas’ separation from the community |
| 2. Gabriel | • Represents Jonas accessing emotions (particularly love) denied by community rules  
• Represents purity because he is untainted by the community’s rules | • Gabriel can’t sleep or adapt to life in the Nurturing center so he is brought into Jonas’ home; everyone has to sign something saying that they won’t become attached (typifying the community’s rules and morality). Jonas is unable to resist caring for Gabriel despite the societal expectations  
• Becomes Jonas’ Receiver during his stay at the house and the escape  
• Becomes the reason that Jonas escapes ahead of the Giver’s time frame | Gabriel is necessary to give Jonas a reason to achieve emotional maturity/security and a reason to break ties with the community |
| 3. Sled | • Moving downhill on the sled symbolizes the transfer of memories from the Giver to Jonas  
• Symbolizes rescue when Jonas needs to mentally and physically escape the community’s reality | • First memory given to Jonas by the Giver  
• Shows Jonas what cold is so that he can use those memories to protect Gabriel and himself from the heat-seeking airplanes during their escape – he makes them both cold.  
• Jonas finds the sled at the end when he and Gabriel are about to give up. They use the sled to go toward the lights of the house in Elsewhere | Sled is used to illustrate receiving memory and Jonas’ escape. |
| 4. Light Eyes | • Symbolizes the ability to see deeply, which allows Jonas to be the Receiver (he has depth of vision)  
• Symbolizes separation from the community | • Lily points out that Jonas and Gabriel both have ‘funny’ eyes which angers Jonas because he wants to be part of the community in the beginning of the book.  
• Light eyes allow colors to refract more easily allowing Jonas to see colors more clearly  
• Symbolizes separation from the crowd | The light eyes symbolize a person’s ability to think and see more clearly and deeply. |
| 5. River | • Symbolizes the boundary between the community and Elsewhere which stops people from leaving  
• Symbolizes change – river continues to move away, not static  
• Symbolizes death | • Caleb’s death by drowning in the river introduces the negativity of death, which can be compared to the attitudes of the community to release.  
• Jonas crosses the river to escape to Elsewhere | The river represents a block between the community and free thoughts and actions |