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Title: The Giver

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Summary of this story:

A 12-year-old boy, Jonas, is living a highly ordered and safe life within a civilization called “the community”, a futuristic society that is highly protected. There is no war, no hunger and no pain, but there is also no colour, no music, nor are there any emotions and feelings. At twelve years old, each member of the Community has their profession carefully chosen for them by the Committee of Elders. Jonas is selected to be the Receiver of Memory at Ceremony of Twelve. His job is to store and preserve all the memories of this world, including the memory of colour, music, emotions, feelings and more. As he receives the memories from The Giver – the old Receiver of Memory, he finds out about wars, the feeling of pain and hunger from the past. Yet, the most marvellous is “love”. He feels disconnected from the others as they cannot have those memories and feelings. Therefore, Jonas breaks the strict rule by returning those memories to everyone in the Community, and is forced to leave the Community. The Giver, however, stays to help the Community.

Reflection:

The book impressed me so much because it is not only a sci-fi book, but it also discusses humanity. Everyone in the world is special and non-identical, but differences are not allowed in the Community. All the children grow up under surveillance since they were born. There is a speaker in all the families to tap their conversation. There is also no freedom in the Community. Initially, I was confused about why the Community would delete the memories and feelings of the members to set up this highly ordered society. Then, I got the answer from the conversation between Jonas and The Giver.

In the past, people in the Community lived like any other civilization. They possessed their memories and feelings. However, because of humanity, people also possessed desires and selfishness. Humanity is complex and elusive. Wars and conflicts thus happened. There were countless moments of pain, anger and sadness. Many people lost their precious lives on the battlefield. Those things were extremely cruel. In order to lead pain-free lives, the Community was founded. The Community is really stable - people live lives where nothing is ever unexpected… or inconvenient…or unusual. Life is without colour, pain or the past. However, is it the best society for humans? It might seem perfect for some of us, and for Jonas at first. However, his opinion changes after he receives memories. He understands that these emotions lead to a lot of pain but at the same time, they are the essence of life. Happiness and blessedness do not exist in the Community and thus, life is boring. The most priceless aspect of life for Jonas and also for us is “love”. This basic human emotion is so amazing - we care about others, we feel warm, we feel happiness… Love is a power. It gives us the energy and the motivation to stay in this world. Love is magic. It brings a beam of light in the darkness. In the Community, people seem to care about each other. They share their dreams in the morning and talk about their experiences in the evening, but do they have emotions? No. They don’t really feel glad and relaxed. The members all live like robots, not humans.

Pain is not worthless. This special book has enlightened me that although there are many pains and difficulties, that is the meaning of experiencing our lives. When you eat candy after eating a sour fruit, do you think that candy is sweeter and tastier than before? Because of the ordeal, the banality of life will be more precious and beautiful. For example, health is really important for those who have come through a serious illness. People in the Community cannot appreciate the real joy of life, so life is meaningless to them. Pain also reminds us and guides us when we make mistakes. ‘Pain reminds us that we are still alive,’ that’s what I have learnt from this book.

(692 words)