

The Protector is a sequel to **The Giver** written by Lois Lowry

The Protector

written by Kyle Martin, pen name Jonas Smith

I

The wind rustles Jonas' hair. Gabe's small hand reaches out to hold Jonas'.

"Gabe, Sameness does not accept you. Are you ready to leave?" asks Jonas.

Gabe's big fearful eyes threaten tears as he softly chokes out the word, "Yes."

As their sled plummets down the snowy hill, the boys leave Sameness. Cold white powder clouds their eyes. The sled slows and comes to a stop in Differentness. People come to greet them. The first to arrive is Michael, a tall old man.

Michael declares, "Your courage and strength are extraordinary. We have been waiting for you."

"You know about Sameness?" Jonas asks with confusion.

"Yes. Long ago a group left our society. They believe Sameness is better and safer. Jonas, do you agree?"

"No, I escaped Sameness."

Michael explains, "Differentness prizes autonomy. Citizens make their own decisions. They are encouraged to look at different perspectives and constantly evolve. For example, some people are not happy you arrived. With an influx of mouths to feed from Sameness, they fear a food shortage."

Jonas' fretful voice whispers, "What if the people here kick out my kind?"

Michael nods his head thoughtfully, "That is a real possibility. Our community votes and adheres to the majority, but we nurture our young to be open-minded and fair. They are taught to respect evidence and reasoning and to show empathy to people in difficult situations. The health of our community is measured by our treatment of the weak and the old. I have faith in our community."

II

Differentness votes to accept Sameness refugees.

A young couple, the Smith's, adopt Jonas and Gabe. They have a son, John (14), and a daughter, Karyn (6).

Jonas tells his new family, "Sameness thought Gabe was slow. He was scheduled to be released a week after we escaped."

Confusion clouds Karyn's face as she asks, "What does released mean?"

John pipes in with a joke, "Does it mean Gabe is sent to live with the monkeys at the zoo?"

Karyn and John start to giggle, but suddenly stop as Jonas says, "It means he is euthanized."

Horrified, John says, "They don't even give him a chance!"

The Smith family vows to support and encourage Gabe.

Gabe loves books. "Kaka (Karyn), read to me?"

After the story, Gabe whispers, "Teach me?"

Patently Karyn teaches Gabe 26 letter sounds. "Gabe, A makes the sound Ahh, like apple. Make the motion of eating an apple when you say A."

With Karyn's help, Gabe enters Kindergarten already reading.

III

Jonas knows he must return to Sameness.

Dad, "I need to find the Giver before he too, is released. It is not just the underperforming Twos, the Eightys are also released. Do you understand why I must return and give them a choice?"

Mr. Smith wipes a tear from his eye, as he says, "Jonas, we love and support you. Go."

IV

Jonas' journey to Sameness is long and arduous. He travels on foot, hiding during the day and walking at night. He arrives at the Giver's house cold and tired.

"I am happy to see you, old friend," says Jonas.

"Likewise," says the Giver.

Jonas now has the power coupled with the Giver's to display the images of Differentness to the community.

On a big screen, the community watches depictions of justice vs prejudice, free speech vs censorship, and liberty vs constraint. They witness the miracle of birth, and the grief of death. They begin to understand Differentness and the truth.

Jonas asks the community, "Who would like to join me on the journey back to Differentness?"

Silence fills the room as the community ponders a finite existence with unlimited differences.

Suddenly the entire community begins to chant, "Yes, to truth."

V

Sameness is over. The world exists with all voices heard. There are many voices. The large group rights the small wrongs. At least that is what Jonas has come to find living in Sameness," It took a while, but Differentness prevailed."

Many years later, Jonas tells the historian writing his account, "Differentness is not to be feared, but instead embraced. Without Differentness, Dr. Gabriel Smith would not have cured cancer. And at age 90, I would not have authored the sequel to "The Giver", "The Protector". A warning for future generations to protect Differentness and never take it for granted."