

The Giver

Read the following passage and answer the question that follows.

Jonas finally caught his father's eye and waved. Father grinned and waved back, then held up the hand of the newchild on his lap, making it wave, too.

It wasn't Gabriel. Gabe was back at the Nurturing Center today, being cared for by the night crew. He had been given an unusual and special reprieve from the committee, and granted an additional year of nurturing before his Naming and Placement. Father had gone before the committee with a plea on behalf of Gabriel, who had not yet gained the weight appropriate to his days of life nor begun to sleep soundly enough at night to be placed with his family unit. Normally such a newchild would be labeled Inadequate and released from the community. 5

Instead, as a result of Father's plea, Gabriel had been labeled Uncertain and given the additional year. He would continue to be nurtured at the Center and would spend his nights with Jonas's family unit. Each family member, including Lily, had been required to sign a pledge that they would not become attached to this little temporary guest, and that they would relinquish him without protest or appeal when he was assigned to his own family unit at next year's Ceremony. 10 15

At least, Jonas thought, after Gabriel was placed next year, they would still see him often because he would be part of the community. If he were released, they would not see him again. Ever. Those who were released even as newchildren were sent Elsewhere and never returned to the community.

Father had not had to release a single newchild this year, so Gabriel would have represented a real failure and sadness. Even Jonas, though he didn't hover over the 20

The first Ceremony began right on time, and Jonas watched as one after another each newchild was given a name and handed by the Nurturers to its new family unit. For some, it was a first child. But many came to the stage accompanied by another 25

child beaming with pride to receive a little brother or sister, the way Jonas had when he was about to be a Five.

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The audience applause, which was enthusiastic at each Naming, rose in an exuberant swell when one parental pair, glowing with pride, took a male newchild and heard him named Caleb. 30

This new Caleb was a replacement child. The couple had lost their first Caleb, a cheerful little Four. Loss of a child was very, very rare. The community was extraordinarily safe, each citizen watchful and protective of all children. But somehow the first little Caleb had wandered away unnoticed, and had fallen into the river. The entire community had performed the Ceremony of Loss together, 35 murmuring the name Caleb throughout an entire day, less and less frequently, softer in volume, as the long and somber day went on, so that the little Four seemed to fade away gradually from everyone's consciousness.

Now, at this special Naming, the community performed the brief Murmur-of-Replacement Ceremony, repeating the name for the first time since the 40 loss: softly and slowly at first, then faster and with greater volume, as the couple stood on the stage with the newchild sleeping in the mother's arms. It was as if the first Caleb were returning.

Another newchild was given the name Roberto, and Jonas remembered that Roberto the Old had been released only last week. But there was no Murmur-of-Replacement Ceremony for the new little Roberto. Release was not the same as Loss.



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Question: How does the author effectively convey the disturbing aspects of Jonas's Community? Use TWO PEALs and explain with relevant evidence from the passage.

POINT	
EVIDENCE + ANALYSIS	
LINK	

POINT	
EVIDENCE + ANALYSIS	
LINK	

Suggested Answer:

Point: In the Community, some newborn children are released which is disturbing, as it is clear that this means they will be killed.

Evidence + Analysis: Gabriel is described to have “not yet gained the weight appropriate to his days of life” which suggests that he is regarded with disapproval for not being at an acceptable weight. The word “appropriate” suggests that there is a standard to be met even with regards to a baby’s weight, which is a harsh requirement since the baby has no control over this. Additionally, the words “nor begun to sleep soundly enough at night” is another strict requirement that is imposed upon an innocent life, reminding the reader that the Community is stringent and has unreasonable expectations. Finally, the words “such a newchild would be labeled Inadequate and released” highlights the unsettling nature of the community. The author capitalises “Inadequate” to draw attention to the fact that it is a label, and that babies as young as Gabriel can be marked and condemned. The word “released” refers to death, and the fact that Gabriel will be put to death for not meeting conventional standards of health is both a frightening and disconcerting scenario.

Link: Hence, it is evident that a feature of the community that is disquieting and a cause for concern, is the murder of babies who are not perfectly healthy.

Point: Another disturbing aspect of the Community is that they choose not to remember or honour the memory of their dead.

Evidence + Analysis: When Caleb drowned in an accident, the Community conducted a Ceremony of Loss which would usually imply a funeral in honour of a person who has passed. Perturbingly however, their Ceremony involves saying the person’s name “less and less frequently, softer in volume...so that the little Four seemed to fade away gradually from everyone’s consciousness.” The words “less and less” as well as “softer” imply that the reduction in frequency as well as volume of saying his name is meant to get people to forget about him. Meanwhile the words “fade away gradually from everyone’s consciousness” highlights the fact that the dead are to be forgotten, rather than loved, remembered and honoured. What is even more troubling is that a “replacement child” is produced for Caleb’s parents and as the Community murmurs the name, “It was as if the first Caleb were returning.” This suggests that the Caleb who drowned is all but forgotten as he is replaced by the new baby and given the same name. The Community chooses not to honour their dead and it is a startling scenario when they even choose to not process grief or experience any of the usual emotions associated with death.

Link: Thus, another alarming aspect of the Community comes to light when it is shown that the people choose not to process death, honour their dead or even remember them, choosing to replace them instead.