

Librarian's Shelf

By Lori Juhlin

### 20 years in the making, Giver lands in theaters

Long before the immense popularity of current dystopian novels "The Hunger Games" and "Divergent" came a book about a seemingly perfect world, free of pain, turmoil, even feelings. "The Giver" by Lois Lowry came out in 1993, and garnered the prestigious Newbery Medal in 1994. I remember reading this book as a child, and over the past 20 years reading it again whenever the mood struck, to escape back to the world depicted in the story.

When I discovered "The Giver" was being made into a movie 20 years after it was originally published, I was excited once again to enter that world. Only then, when reading about the upcoming movie, did I discover that one of the favorite books of my childhood, was actually a series! "The Giver" is the first book in the Giver Quartet, followed by "Gathering Blue," "Messenger," and "Son." I then proceeded to work my way through the series, occasionally wondering how the books would tie together, since books two and three are not set in the same community of the original. In the end, book four wraps it up nicely, bringing the story full circle and back to where "The Giver" ends.

"The Giver" has not had an easy road. Over the past 20 years many people have challenged the book and questioned its place in hands of youth, mainly due to some adult themes of infanticide and euthanasia of the old (cleverly disguised as "release" from society). Many classic books have been challenged due to content, including well-known books, "To Kill a Mockingbird," "Huckleberry Finn," and others, so "The Giver" is in good company.

This past weekend "The Giver" reached theaters, and many fans of the book were wondering if it would stay true to the story that we have loved for many years. I too was wondering, as I have seen good movie adaptations of books, and ones that took a lot of liberty in the stories and changed them extensively. I had read that Lois Lowry was involved in the adaptation of the movie, and hoped that would result in a movie that stayed more true to the book.

On Thursday evening, at the first showing of the movie, I sat in a darkened theater and was swept away into the world that Lois Lowry conceived so many years ago and was brought to the screen under the masterful direction of Phillip Noyce. I was amazed at how well the movie captured the spirit of the book, and while some things were changed, many of my favorite scenes in the book were brought to life just as I had imagined them.

Seeing Jonas passed over in the ceremony and then selected at the end to be the receiver of memory was amazingly well done. As is common in novels today, a hint of romance was added, but only to illustrate what the society was lacking and helped make the story more relatable. The movie ends very much the same as the book, leaving the viewer satisfied, but wanting more from this seemingly perfect society. As a fan of the series, I can only hope that the rest of the quartet finds its way to the silver screen.

The entire series is available at Columbus Public Library, so now is the time to read the book behind the movie, and discover the rest of the series if you didn't realize there is more to the story.