

My Favourite Novel

Good morning Principals, Vice-Principals, teachers and fellow schoolmates,

I am Alex Choi from class 4C, and today I would like to share a book with you all called “The Giver” by Lois Lowry.

This book was actually a gift from my sister. She told me to read it because I am not kind enough and that I am evil. Of course this is a joke but the book is indeed about social justice and humanity.

Nowadays we can read about wars, political issues and injustices in the evening news or via our Facebook feeds. Many people share that news on social media, often making judgments and criticizing the actions of others. But how can we know what is true? We often can't tell anymore. People around us arguing for one side and they can easily persuade us. So the question I want you all to think about is “Would you stand up and turn against most people and fight for your beliefs?” Everyone, do you think you are brave enough? When you are the only one in society or in this school, would you come up to this stage and tell all of us the wrongs you have found in this school? I could not, frankly, because it takes a lot of courage for me to stand here and speak to you all. But the character in the book “the Giver” could do that.

Jonas is a 12 year old boy living in a world where everything is under control. People take medicine every day to inhibit their emotions. Citizens' family, birth, partners, children, jobs, education, basically everything is controlled by the government. The officials distribute work and everything. That makes a world with complete fairness, order, peace. However, in this system there is a position called The Giver.

His job is to provide advice to the government as he can read about the past and have emotions. In other words, he can think like you and I. Isn't that ironic? If people do not think they cannot complain and the world will be peaceful and happy. But is this right? What is the difference between us and the robots, the machines if we don't think and express ourselves?

Jonas took up that post. He became the Giver and found out that everything the government had been doing was wrong and against humanity. But other people didn't think it was a problem, they were happy to accept whatever the government asked them to do. So, Jonas stood up all by himself, and turned against the government, his family and friends.

The book is breathtaking because it features a world which we thought would be perfect, we called Utopia, yet it is taken down by one man with emotions, compassion and critical thinking. It is that simple? All we need to do is to stand up and voice out. But in reality, how many of us can do that? I would like to invite all of you to read this book, "The Giver", and reflect on yourselves because we need you. Every one of you will be a member of our society in the future. We will need people to lead us, as you can see how unqualified those chief executive nominees were in last Tuesday's debate. Thank you for your attention.