Creative Writing Based on The Giver: **Daffodils In The Smoke**

“How? I can't do it. Why?” Jonas kept pondering to himself, wondering why he couldn't remember what had happened. It was like a dream he had just witnessed, so close, yet so far, slowly slipping from the shadow of what was once his dull mind. He knew about the holiday that might have never happened; the time, place, and experiences were completely absent from his psyche. As he sat gloomily in his creaky pinewood chair, he couldn't help but wonder about his depressing life and how melancholic he had become from day to day. Nothing had been the same since Fiona passed. He still kept the ring he had bought for the proposal he never got to make. Without her, Jonas felt entirely devoid of purpose. She was perfect. The love of his life, the only singular thing he had ever cared about. He used to joke about how the gods attentively sculpted—

“Wait, what am I doing? I never had a wife. I don't even have children.” Jonas had breached the delicate fabric of his mind; he no longer had a grasp on reality versus imagination. Thoughts of his son flooded his mind. Were they real? His mind was scrambled. Discombobulated, he tried to make it stop, to make it end—not like anyone would notice if he died anyway. He desperately grasped at the objects around him, but his hands phased right through. The memory of the desk and the vase full of vibrant daffodils his son had meticulously glued back together after the soccer ball shattered it, all of it was fake. Nothing was real. Until he slipped on the sludgy water leaking from the shattered vase and fell backward, crashing through the large window that was once used for breathtaking views of the city rooftops. For once in his life, he felt peace with the wind wrestling against his body as he plunged down from the twentieth storey.

Beep, beep, beep. Jonas woke up, his head pounding, his whole body in agony. A suffocating yet comfortable neck brace was fitted tightly around his collar. Most of his body was wrapped in bandages, his limbs encased in casts, and the sharp scent of rubbing alcohol accompanied the eerie, somehow familiar smell of the cold infirmary. Before he could fully come to his senses and comprehend what was happening, the door violently swung open. There he was. A strong-looking young man stormed in. As Jonas stared expressionlessly at the face of the person tearing up and comforting him, it all came back to him. EVERYTHING. All his memories and experiences came flooding in, from the moment he was born, lying helplessly in his mother's arms. He remembered when he first held tiny Asher in his hands, the tragic death of Fiona, his beloved, and the first time Asher had a cast wrapped around his mangled arm in this very room. Until now. Jonas couldn't help but tear up as Asher’s arms closed around his scrawny body.

“Everyone thought you were gone. They all gave up hope,” Asher muttered between sobs. That day was one that Asher would eventually forget, but Jonas—no, not Jonas—for after falling from his twentieth-story apartment, he remembered everything that had

ever happened to him. Jonas finally figured out the truth behind why he used to keep forgetting things. The government, the Elders, and the higher-ups in charge of the community routinely cleansed the residents' minds of memories to hide trauma, alongside the truth of the devastating war and famine that had swept across the country years ago. He alone was the only one who could remember everything. He planned to spread the truth to the public and revolt against the government. Jonas tried everything to get the public's attention; he ran campaigns, printed flyers, and stuck them on buildings around busy places, but nothing worked. His son was the only person who believed in Jonas' outlandish theory.

He eventually orchestrated a risky plan to gather everybody's attention. Jonas attended a ceremony of release for an elderly man in the community while Asher stayed just outside the theatre, ready for the signal. Just as the man's life was about to be projected onto the theatre screen on stage, Jonas released the smoke bombs he had stocked in his backpack. As the crowd of people became disorientated and the Elders were being escorted out by government officials, Jonas used the distraction to briskly rush onto the stage. He gave the sign to Asher using his walkie-talkie. Asher barricaded the exits from the outside, using a homemade electrical device to hack the system controlling the theatre and government technology. Jonas captured the attention of the crowd; he gave a pre-planned, short speech on how the higher-ups controlling society were erasing the memories of the people. He spoke of how he remembered everything of the Great War from when he was a child, and how people have a right to keep their memories and experiences because that is what makes humans different from lesser, unintelligent life-forms. While Jonas delivered his invigorating speech, Asher programmed the theatre screen to broadcast videos of the Great War and the forgotten tapes of experiments conducted by the government to wipe past memories. Asher had accessed all the hidden videotapes simply by hacking into their network, viewing the files and software within.

Almost all the thousands in the crowd were furious and riled up, demanding answers. Click, click, click. All the heavy-duty doors holding back the mob of wild animals voraciously swung open, releasing the ferocious beasts, with Jonas spearheading the movement. Everyone took to the streets, protesting ravenously and stampeding through, demanding a true explanation as to why they had been robbed of their freedom. The ungovernable, uncontrollable, and audacious ever-increasing assembly of resilient renegades demanded their choice and freedom back. They set fire to government buildings, chanted slurs, and collected objects to use as weapons. Everyone thought of themselves as the "top dogs" until the government said enough. A unified wall of riot police relentlessly marched toward the mob, batons in one hand, riot shields in the other. The citizens didn't stand a chance. Jonas and Asher shot down a few while the others stormed in, kicking, punching, and fighting the police. The government knew this would happen, sending in SWAT teams and the National Guard to

gun down the mob of mavericks. Gunfire rang out, the smell of smoke and fire wafted through the air, and police and citizens collapsed from bullets and raining debris. Jonas and Asher blasted the armed forces with their rifles, while others chucked Molotov cocktails and bricks at government houses and armed officials. Complete pandemonium. It was utter chaos in the streets, with people flooding the roads in front of the Parliament House.

Amidst the raging war, Jonas sneaked out of the picture to collect the pre-prepared C4 and various other homemade explosive devices he and Asher had stocked beforehand. He planned to fully overthrow the government. With Asher's assistance, Jonas eventually set up all the explosives around Parliament House. Detonator remote in hand, he situated himself in front of the massive building, his arms outstretched heroically, ready for this pivotal moment. Bang. A gunshot rang out. A river of red streamed down his neck, pooling on his chest. His lifeless body hit the pavement. Asher leapt toward his father, clutching him with all his strength betwixt the now-familiar feeling of the ground trembling from explosions, screaming fires waging wars of their own against the elements, and grieving mothers facing the consequences of their rebellious children's actions.

"Save them, son. Save these poor people. Let them cherish their memories just like I had the chance to. Set them free," Jonas whispered. He got to look back on all his memories one last time, realising his life wasn't all that bad after all. The world around him screeched to an inexplicably, inconceivably sharp stop; his heart rate slowed, and he ultimately strained out one last weak breath. Freedom.