

back from Milwaukee

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from Viki in Canada, replying to a previous Canadian post:

*I just thought I'd point out that I live in Canada and read *The Giver* as part of my curriculum in grade seven. Personally, I feel that the systems in Canada allow for a lot of debate and argument, but Canadians tend to be more open about the material they are willing to supply to the youth and that's why there are less instances of books like *The Giver* being challenged.*

This past weekend I was in Milwaukee to see quite a fine production of THE GIVER done by the First Stage Theater. The amazing thing was the way they dealt with the color (or lack of color) issue. Using special lights (I will not be able to describe the actual technology, or even remember the name of the sodiumblahblahlah lights) that sucked all the color out, the set and the performers all appeared, literally, black and white (and gray). Then, at appropriate moments, by shining a regular light on one item—apple; books in a bookcase; geraniums in a planter—the red color burst forth, dazzling... It was really quite remarkable. As the boy increased in knowledge, the general color came up very gradually. And the performances were all excellent. Interestingly...The Giver did not have the beard or longish hair that we have come to expect. His hair was quite short, grayish, and he was tall and slim, though he affected a hunched, stooped posture that made him seem tired and weighed down. But even those of us who have come to think of *The Giver* as bearded could, after a moment, completely adjust and accept this new and different version.... that's the power of an actor, and of the performance.

First Stage has kindly named a scholarship after me; and this first recipient of the Lois Lowry Scholarship is Joel Boyd, who played Jonas, and who now has a year's worth of free acting classes. (I bet he didn't know, nor did the theater people, that "Boyd" was my grandmother's maiden name, and my sister's middle name)



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