

Chapter 1: “The Sound of the Shell”

1. Examine the characters of Ralph, Jack, or Piggy in terms of what they possess that link them with their past lives, and what their emerging roles on the island are. Is there any indication which of these characters may be advancing more rapidly toward savagery than the others? Support your conclusion.

2. What is the symbolism of the conch? Why does it seem to have so much power? What characteristics does it have in common with what it appears to symbolize?

“Here at last was the imagined but never fully realized place leaping into real life”(15). N/A

“For a moment the boys were a closed circuit of sympathy with Piggy on the outside...”(21). N/A

“Eyes shining, mouths open, triumphant, they savored the right of domination” (29). N/A

“They knew very well why he hadn’t [killed the piglet]: because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood” (31). N/A

Chapter 2: “Fire on the Mountain”

1. What is the significance of the boys’ first attempt at the fire? How does the result foreshadow events to come? What is the result of the fire? Why are the creeper vines significant? How does the fire’s result mirror the boy with the mulberry-colored birthmark’s fear?

2. What is the meaning of the beast that makes its first appearance in this chapter? Discuss how it is portrayed, and the others’ reaction to it. Does this foreshadow its later significance? How does the beast become real to the boys?

About Ralph’s feeling of the beast: “He felt himself facing something ungraspable” (37). N/A

“Then, with the martyred expression of a parent who has to keep up with the senseless ebullience of the children, he [Piggy] picked up the conch, turned toward the forest, and began to pick his way over the tumbled scar”(38). N/A

“ ‘I agree with Ralph. We’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages. We’re English, and the English are best at everything. So we’ve got to do the right things’ ”(42)
Jack

Chapter 3: “Huts on the Beach”

1. Trace the path of Jack’s success as a hunter and Ralph’s growing ineffectiveness as a leader. Compare their emerging viewpoints in their argument together on the beach. What does this say about the two boys and their roles as civilized young men?

2. What divisions are becoming apparent among the boys on the island? Trace the characters and who they are allied to at this point. Discuss these alliances and why they are occurring.

About Jack: “He tried to convey the compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up”(51). N/A

“ ‘If you’re hunting sometimes... you can feel as if you’re not hunting, but—being hunted, as if something’s behind you all the time in the jungle.’”(53). Jack

Chapter 4: “Painted Faces and Long Hair”

1. Examine Simon’s actions in this chapter and compare them to Roger’s. Both boys are outsiders like Piggy, yet seem to be accepted. Based upon these observations, present an argument for whom they will eventually ally themselves and explain why.

2. What is the significance of the camouflage paint that Jack puts on? How does it affect his personality? Why will it make him a better hunter? In what ways does it hide his personality? In what ways does it reveal his personality? Discuss its symbolic meaning as well as the others’ reactions to it.

About Henry: “He became absorbed beyond mere happiness as he felt himself exercising control over living things”(61). N/A

On Roger throwing stones: “...there was a space around Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger’s arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins”(62). N/A

On Jack’s ‘mask’: “...the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness”(64). N/A

Jack’s thoughts on his first kill: “His mind was crowded with memories; memories of the knowledge that had come to them when they closed in on the struggling pig, knowledge that they had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long satisfying drink”(70). N/A

About Jack and Ralph: “There was the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill; and there was the world of longing and baffled commonsense”(71) N/A

After the ship passes: “Not even Ralph knew how a link between him and Jack had been snapped and fastened elsewhere”(73). N/A

Chapter 5: “Beast From Water”

1. Trace the references to the beast in the novel thus far. Parallel that with the diminishing sense of order on the island and the boys’ gradual embracing of Jack’s savagery. What is the true nature of the beast on the island that Simon is unable to verbally define?

2. Discuss how and why Jack disrupts the meeting. What is at the core of the power struggle between he and Ralph? What techniques of anarchy and disruption does Jack apply? What is the result? What does it tell you about the characters of Jack and Ralph?

Ralph’s thoughts: “He found himself understanding the wearisomeness of this life, where every path was an improvisation and a considerable part of one’s waking life was spent watching one’s feet”(76). N/A

Ralph's thoughts: "If faces were different when lit from above or below—what was a face? What was anything?"(78)? N/A

" 'But I tell you that smoke is more important than the pig, however often you kill one' "(81).
Ralph

" 'Things are breaking up. I don't understand why. We began well; we were happy. And then—
...Then people started getting frightened' "(82). Ralph

" 'I know there isn't no beast—not with claws and all that, I mean—but I know there isn't no
fear either...Unless—...Unless we get frightened of people' "(84). Piggy

On The Beast: " 'What I mean is... Maybe it's only us.' ... Simon became inarticulate in his
efforts to express mankind's essential illness."(89). Simon

"The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away. Once there was this and
that; and now—and the ship had gone"(91). N/A

On Jack:" 'I'm scared of him, and that's why I know him. If you're scared of someone you hate
him but you can't stop thinking about him. You kid yourself he's all right really, and then when
you see him again; it's like asthma and you can't breathe' "(93). Piggy

Chapter 6: "Beast From Air"

1. Consider the character of Jack Merridew. How does he appear to be a qualified leader? What
are his actual qualifications? Would he be a good leader? Why or why not? Compare him to
Ralph. Who is better suited to lead the boys? Generally sum up why Jack's character is
introducing anarchy on the island and how.

2. What is the symbolic significance of the parachutist? How and why is it mistaken for the
beast? In what ways is it a symbol of the beast?

"However Simon thought of the beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of a human
at once heroic and sick"(103). N/A

Chapter 7: "Shadows and Tall Trees"

1. The scene in which the boys beat Robert is a crucial development in the story. Examine this
situation. What do the boys' actions say about their descent toward savagery? Why is it so
surprising that Ralph eagerly takes part in the ritual? Why does he? What do the boys' actions
after the beating say about their situation?

2. Consider the character of Simon. How is he different from the others? Why is he unable to
express his thoughts? Why does he seem to know what Ralph is thinking? Trace his development
as a character thus far, and the emerging role he has in the story.

On Ralph's first 'dance': "Ralph too was fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown,
vulnerable flesh. The desire to squeeze and hurt was over-mastering"(115). N/A

“By now, Ralph had no self-consciousness in public thinking but would treat the day’s decisions as though he were playing chess. The only trouble was that he would never be a very good chess player”(117). N/A

Chapter 8: “Gift for the Darkness”

1. Trace the boys’ gradual descent toward savagery to this point in the novel. What does it say about the nature of the beast? What is the beast? Who are the boys most closely related to it? When has it shown itself already? Where is it? Why don’t they see it?

2. Trace the symbolism of Simon’s relationship with The Lord of the Flies. Why is the head described as speaking from inside him? Why does he fall into its mouth? Why does he look it in the face? What is the result of understanding the nature of violence? Support your thesis with evidence from the story.

On The Beast:“ ‘The beast is a hunter... we couldn’t kill it’ ”(126). Jack

Upon leaving the group: “ ‘I’m not going to play any longer. Not with you.’ ”(127). Jack

Describing the Lord of the Flies:“The half-shut eyes were dim with the infinite cynicism of adult life. They assured Simon that everything was a bad business”(137). N/A

On the fire:“ ‘We can’t keep one fire going. And they don’t care. And what’s more, I don’t sometimes’ ”(139). Ralph

“ ‘There isn’t anyone to help you. Only me. And I’m the Beast... Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!... You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you? Close, close, close! I’m the reason why it’s no go? Why things are the way they are’ ”(142)? The LOTF

Simon’s knowledge:“The beast was harmless and horrible; and the news must reach the others as soon as possible.”(142). N/A

Chapter 9: “A View to a Death”

1. Why does Simon travel to the mountaintop? What does he do there? What does he discover there? What is the symbolic meaning of his journey and discovery?

2. What is the meaning behind Simon’s death? How and why is he killed? What is he doing when he is killed? Why do Ralph and Piggy have a part in his death? What part do they play?

During Simon’s death: “Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable”(152). N/A

Chapter 10: “The Shell and the Glasses”

1. How do Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric react to their roles in Simon’s death? What does this tell you about them? What does it tell you about the boys in general? How is this experience related to Golding’s theme that the flaws of mankind are inherent in man’s nature?

2. Examine and compare the two groups' relationship to fire. What is significant about fire keepers versus fire takers or fire makers versus those who only want to use it to cook meat?

Ralph's thoughts: "There was something good about a fire. Something overwhelmingly good" (163). N/A

Chapter 11: "Castle Rock"

1. Trace Roger's evolution from "dark boy" to sadist. What behavior has he expressed that has gradually led him to evolve into a frightening and dangerous figure? How is he a natural extension of Jack's authority? What place does the future hold for Roger on the island?

2. Examine Piggy's last day of life on the island. What does it say about his character and his role on the island? What does he do? Why does he do it? How does his death contribute to the symbolism of the boys' descent toward savagery?

Ralph's thoughts: "—after all we aren't savages really and being rescued isn't a game—" (170).
Ralph

Ralph's actions: "He... gazed at the green and black mask before him, trying to remember what Jack looked like" (178). N/A

Chapter 12: "Cry of the Hunters"

1. Choose any of the main characters whose personalities are described in detail (Ralph, Jack, Simon, Piggy, Roger) and trace their development in the story as it pertains to Golding's theory that the basic flaw of mankind is inherent in man. Support your thesis with character details highlighting their flaws or descent into savagery.

2. Throughout the story, trace the symbolic role of fire. Begin with the raging fire that kills the small boy, consider the changing role of fire between Jack's tribe and Ralph's, and finish with the fire that destroys the island and brings rescue.

"...Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of a true, wise friend called Piggy" (202). N/A