

# Lord of the flies

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

William Golding writes of a group of schoolboys placed on an island, to show how humans react without a figure of authority to determine what's right and what's wrong. The book chronicles the deterioration of order and how the boys' characters form and emerge from the group. The first four chapters are a period of introduction and development where we meet the characters and see how they fit into place in the formation of the islands' hierarchy.

The first boy we meet is Ralph, who we immediately meet as the archetypal schoolboy. He is tall with fair hair and has the appearance of being physically fit. He is also described as "having a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil."

The second boy we meet is Piggy, Piggy is short fat and wears glasses. He also seems to have a cockney accent suggesting that he and Ralph come from different social backgrounds. For example Piggys use of the phrase "all them other kids"

The next character we meet is Jack Merridew and he likes to be called by his surname suggesting he comes from a private school. Jack arrives with the choir and automatically assumes he must be leader because he is head boy and head of the choir. "The boy who controlled them was dressed in the same way though his cap badge was golden. When his party was about ten yards from the platform he shouted an order and they halted." He is aggressive and dominant and has hunter instincts.

Along with Jack we meet a member of the choir, Simon. We are first introduced to Simon as he faints. Simon is shy, but kind and thoughtful, he is an introvert. His character is portrayed as Christ-like.

When we first meet the boys they still very much cling onto what they know of society and how it is run at home. They try to run the island as a democracy and the first step towards this is when the boys hold a meeting and together they elect a leader. Ralph is chosen as the leader, but is helped by a conch he found which is used to attract attention to him. The conch becomes a symbol of power and authority as whoever holds it has the power to talk. We first see an honourable side to Jack when he chooses the boys he defeated to become his followers (Jack and Simon) to go exploring with him. As the group now have a leader they are delegated jobs to do.

In the first chapter we see leadership established by an election to choose a leader organised by the three candidates, Jack, Ralph and Simon. Within the group this means that the younger boys have someone to look up to and can now turn to when they need to find out what to do, progress can be made as the leader chooses people to do different jobs such as building shelter. The boys now settle into a routine. However in the second chapter we see the boys light a fire on top of the mountain, surely something not allowed at home. The fire rages out of control and then settles down to a small fire, could this be significant of things to come?

During the second chapter we see the boys starting to fend for themselves and Jack, who is still in charge of the choir proclaims them to be hunters. Jack is turning into a hunter and trying to take the lead whilst Ralph quietly keeps control, with Piggy by his side, supporting his every word. He becomes a sort of parental figure always pointing out the downside to the boys' behaviour. He says about the fire, " My you've made a big heap!" He also

urges the need for practical considerations, for example shelters after the cold they experienced without them.

In chapter three we Jack evolve into a hunter, he is totally absorbed by the pigs but his attempt to kill is unsuccessful. Ralph is trying to build shelter with Simon's help and is scathing about Jack's failure to get meat and is bitter about his lack of help with shelters. We learn more about Simon and he is repeatedly referred to as being weird. He spends a lot of time on his own in the forest.

In the early part of chapter four patterns of the day have been settled: a routine is established and boys form friendship groups. Initial impressions of characters are now crystallised.

However gradual de-civilisation is emerging. Evidence of this can be seen in the lack of cleanliness over eating and personal hygiene. The boys' social behaviour also worsens as Maurice kicks sand in Percival's eye, because there is no adult presence to punish him he feels little or no guilt. " Roger led the way straight through the castles. Kicking them over, burying the flowers, scattering the chosen stones. Maurice followed, laughing, and added to the destruction. The three littluns paused in their game and looked up.

As it happened, the particular marks in which they were interested had not been touched, so they made no protest. Only Percival began to whimper with an eyeful of sand and Maurice hurried away. In his other life Maurice had received chastisement for filling a younger eye with sand. Now, there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand." This shows us that the boys are slowly

forgetting the rules of a society they have started to forget in favour of their own rules.

Ralph sees a passing ship and runs to the mountain to discover the fire has gone out he shouts to the ship in despair, " come back, come back!" Jack finally kills but enthusiasm over the kill is small because the boys are pre-occupied with the thought that they could've been rescued, Jack is annoyed at this and he punches Piggy, breaking the lens of one of his glasses. Jack has lost the urgency of rescue and is focusing on survival instead this is his natural instinct coming through as opposed to what society has taught him to do.

The boys cook the pig they caught but Piggy is not given any because he didn't hunt. Simon feels guilty because he didn't hunt either and gave his meat to Piggy. This is evidence that Simon is kind and generous.

By the end of chapter four the boy's efforts to replicate the order and structure of the society and the environment they have come from are disjointed and unproductive. Jack has become a hunter and his group of followers, savages. This is because they have no one to enforce the learning and rules of previous years.