

# Symbolism in "lord of the flies"



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the boys who are stranded on the island come in contact with a bunch of fascinating elements that symbolize ideas or concepts. Through the use of symbols such as the beast, the pig's head, and even Piggy's specs, Golding demonstrates that humans, when liberated from society's rules and taboos, allow their natural capacity for evil to dominate their existence. One of the most fascinating and most obvious symbols in *Lord of the Flies* is the object that gives the novel its name, the pig's head. Golding's description of the slaughtered animal's head on a spear is very graphic and even frightening.

The pig's head is depicted as "dim-eyed, grinning faintly, blood blackening between the teeth," and the "obscene thing" is covered with a "black blob of flies" that "tickled under his nostrils". As a result of this detailed, striking image, the reader becomes aware of the great evil and darkness represented by the Lord of the Flies, and when Simon begins to converse with the seemingly inanimate, devil-like object, the source of that wickedness is revealed. Even though the conversation may be entirely a hallucination, Simon learns that the beast, which has long since frightened the other boys on the island, is not an external force.

In fact, the head of the slain pig tells him, "Fancy thinking the beast was something you could hunt and kill! Oh you knew, didn't you? I'm part of you?" That is to say, the evil, epitomized by the pig's head, that is causing the boys' island society to decline is that which is inherently present within man. At the end of this scene, the immense evil represented by this powerful symbol can once again be seen as Simon faints after looking into the wide mouth of the pig and seeing "blackness within, a blackness that spread".

Another of the most used symbols used to present the theme of the novel is the beast. In the imaginations of many of the boys, the beast is a tangible source of evil on the island. However, in reality, it represents the evil naturally present within everyone, which is causing life on the island to deteriorate. Simon begins to realize this even before his encounter with the Lord of the Flies, and during one argument over the existence of a beast, he attempts to share his insight with the others. Timidly, Simon tells them, "Maybe, maybe there is a beast what I mean is maybe it's only us".

In response to Simon's statement, the other boys, who had once conducted their meetings with some sense of order, immediately begin to argue more fiercely. The crowd gives a "wild whoop" when Jack rebukes Ralph, saying "Bollocks to the rules! We're strong we hunt! If there's a beast, we'll hunt it down! We'll close in and beat and beat and beat!" Clearly, the boys' fear of the beast and their ironic desire to kill it shows that the hold which society's rules once had over them has been loosened during the time they have spent without supervision on the island.

In conclusion, Lord of the Flies is a story that portrays the dark, deteriorating life that results from mankind's inherent capacity for evil, which is allowed to control humans when they are freed from the rules of society. Throughout the novel, Golding uses many different objects as symbols to illustrate this theme. Some of those objects would be insignificant in real life and would most likely be taken for granted. However, in Lord of the Flies, each of the previously mentioned symbols is vital to the story's theme.