

# Images in lord of the flies by william golding

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



An image is a representation of something that is portrayed to make the reader visualize a different impression in its place. Images can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt. There are many images used in Lord of the Flies by William Golding. Simply put, fire is a major image that has multiple meanings in the novel. The object that gives the title to the novel is also one of the most important images. The pig's head/Lord of the Flies is full of relevance towards the book. Finally, the image of the conch is quite important. These images have crucial meanings that are necessary to the plot of the novel.

Fire is something that is normally used for cooking and as a light, however in the novel its main purpose is as a signal fire to attract the attention of any passing ships so the boys can be rescued. The fire is the boys' connection with civilization, as long as it is burning there is a hope that they would be rescued. The fire, or lack of fire, is the first major tension between Ralph and Jack. The fire is let out when all the hunters go off with Jack to spear a pig. Meanwhile, Ralph watches a ship go by the island without stopping because there is no smoke visible. "You let the fire out" (73) was all that Ralph had to say to Jack to tell him that he blew a chance to get rescued and that the only way they will ever get saved is if there is a fire burning on the island. Ironically, it is a fire that solves both problems started by Jack letting the signal fire die. "Smoke was seeping through the branches in white and yellow wisps". (216) The smoke was from the fire started by Jack to flush Ralph out of the thicket he was hiding in so he could kill Ralph and put his head on the stick sharpened at both ends.

Ralph managed to evade Jack's trap and run into the forest while the fire continued to grow in size. The hunters entered the forest and forced Ralph back to the beach where he runs into the only adult in the novel. "We saw your smoke" (223) said the navy officer who is saying that the fire is the reason that they found the boys. When asked who is the boss, Ralph confidently says "I am" (224) officially ending the feud between him and Jack. Without fire the boys would not have been rescued and Ralph would have never gotten any of his previous power back.

The pig's head was left as an offering to the beast by Jack and the savages. It is described as ".... grinning amusedly..." (151) with "... white teeth and dim eyes..." (152). The pig's head is most likely the most important image in the novel. When Simon has his one-way conversation with the Lord of the Flies, it took the place of the pig's head and it implemented two important things. "I'm part of you ... why things are what they are..." (158). When the Lord of the Flies says this, he is telling Simon that the beast is inside of everyone and it is the evil in their hearts that is making them savages.

The pig's head also tells Simon as "a schoolmaster" (158) that he is going to have some "fun" with Simon. This simply foreshadows Simon's death in the next chapter. The Lord of the Flies represents the beast and all the evil in the boys stranded on the island. Found on the beach near the start of the novel, the conch shell is an image that represents many concepts. The conch represents structure and democracy. "We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting. They'll come when they hear it. (12) When the conch is blown it allows the boys to come together in a civilized manner to decide

what they should do. “ Then I'll give him the conch ... he can hold it when he's speaking” (31). This idea by Ralph created a way to govern meetings in a democratic way where everyone could speak their mind. Throughout the novel the conch slowly begins to lose its power over the group of boys as they become more like savages. Once Jack starts breaking the rules, chaos starts to occur as the boys disregard the conch.

This shows that without the boys giving the conch power, structure and discipline will soon be no more. Eventually, when the boys split into different tribes, the conch has no importance because most of the boys have now become savages. “... the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist” (200). When Roger pushed the rock down the hill to murder Piggy, the conch was in his hands. When it blew apart it signified the end of democratic power ever coming back to the island and represented when government does not always work.

Without the conch, structure might not have been established and instead of being civil the boys might have turned into savages very early in their stay on the island. In the Lord of the Flies by William Golding, the images are necessary to the plot of the novel. Without fire, the pigs head, and the conch; the boys might have not got rescued. Jack and Ralph may have not had the same bad blood between them. They may have not been as evil or savage-like, and possibly they may have turned into savages very soon after their plane crashed. Think of all the different endings possible if some of these key images were changed.