

Lord of the flies essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Lord of the flies is a story that begins in the aftermath of a plane crash in the Pacific Ocean during an unnamed war in which a group of English schoolboys are isolated on what they assume to be an island, under no adult supervision they are left to ' fend for themselves' create their own friendships and fight their own battles. As the story unfolds the boys develop a miniature society in which they try to include rules and order, but, each with their own ideas of right and wrong and sometimes totally different priorities, difficulties inevitably arise, their little community collapses and the boys are thrown into a world of hurt and fear.

Because of the intensity of the problems each of these boys have to face in this novel at such an early age you could say that each one is, in his own way, a hero but you could also say that, because of its tragic storyline this novel holds no heroes. In this essay I hope to find out why or why not the characters in this story are heroes. Before I start this essay I feel it is necessary to define a ' hero'.

The Collins dictionary defines a hero as " one greatly regarded for achievements or qualities" but I don't believe that this is necessarily true, in my opinion a hero is someone who does something unusually brave to their own standards, someone who puts themselves out in order to do something for someone else. A hero is someone who thinks of others before themselves and does what he or she thinks is right. One of the first characters we encounter in this novel is a young, fair-haired boy of twelve named Ralph. Golding idealizes Ralph from the beginning, lavishing praise on his physical beauty.

In the island sun he immediately achieves a golden hue, a physical manifestation of his inward qualities. Ralph immediately gains status from his possession of the conch shell, which gives him the authority to speak when the boys come together. He, I believe is a natural leader and tries to instill a sense of order into the boys, he realises, like all the other boys that a world without adults means that they could do as they pleased but unlike the others he immediately realises the need for rules and organisation, Stay round here wait and not go away.

Three of us -if we take more we'd get mixed up" Ralph's rules keep the boys attached to some semblance of society, but without these rules there will be disastrous consequences, " The rules are the only thing we've got! " Ralph is a very organised person, methodical and sensible he instils an element of calm into an otherwise panicky situation. Ralph although calm seems to have a somewhat over optimistic view, he is convinced that his father, a commander in the Navy, will come and rescue them.

He sees the island almost as his Eden, a perfect place were he can play without the restrictions of civilisation and adults, he doesn't panic over their situation on the island but considers it as their paradise, when he surveys the island from the summit of the mountain he states that it " belongs" to them. He wants everyone to live fairly among one another; he is very democratic and takes a rational perspective based on ideas of justice.

Ralph often finds throughout the story that he cannot control the boys this dissuades him quite a bit as he is a very reluctant leader taking the role because he has too, rather than wants to, he doesn't really have the drive

that Jack has but definitely has the best leadership qualities. He is dutiful and dedicated but his attempts to create order among the boys fail and toward the end of the play the weight of leadership becomes too much for him, but still he carries on, this I believes makes Ralph kind of a hero he doesn't want to be the leader but feels he has to, he tries to do what he thinks is right and knows they need him, Well they're frightened" He cares about the boys especially the littluns.

A sense of fear begins to set in among the younger boys, and only Ralph's presence seems to create some sort of calm, he is optimistic about the whole problem and therefore the " littluns" look to him for reassurance of their rescue. The fact that he is required to look after the littluns is Ralph's major burden, he doesn't really know how to cope with young children unprepared to care for themselves or demonstrate responsibility.

Despite his calm attitude Ralph is not entirely fearless, he is scared, like the others of ghosts and the beast he is unsure about his power over the other boys and is constantly worried about whether he was intelligent enough to lead the group. He is constantly comparing his level of intelligence to that of Piggys, " Are there ghosts, Piggy, or beasts? "

He depends on Piggy to, like an adult, guide him and help him through things he's not sure of, but also as a child does an adult he loathes him for knowing more as if he's scared that the facts would spoil his fun, but piggy is not an adult and Ralph knows this, he, although he tries his best, cannot take on the responsibilities that he has to, he has no experience to cope with these things and constantly craves the guidance of an adult.

What we must remember throughout this is that Ralph is only a little boy; he has all the fears of a little boy and all the insecurities “ Oh God, oh God! ” When Ralph sees the boat his insecurities really are shown, in this chapter it shows just how scared and vulnerable Ralph is, he isn't as strong as Jack and desperately wants to go home, it shows exactly how hard Ralph finds the position of leader within the group, he is weighed down by responsibilities, he just wants to go home.

This makes Ralph in my opinion a hero, he hasn't done anything overly brave or wonderful but he has tried his best to please the group and instil a sense of calm and order into the situation and, although he doesn't succeed, he carries on with the persistence unusual for a child, it may not have worked but he's only a child. Piggy, the next person we meet, is overweight, unfit and has asthma-referred to as ' assmar' he finds physical activities hard but mentally he is very advanced for his age. Piggy is the intellectual of the group. Although he is physically inept, clumsy and asthmatic, he has a quick wit and the best grasp of their situation.

It is his knowledge of the conch shell that allows Ralph to summon the rest of the boys together and he who shows the most concern for some sort of rational order. This is shown in his interest in names immediately asking Ralph for his and wishing that Ralph would reciprocate “ I don't care what they call me” He brings up the conversation of names at the first opportunity. To Piggy names represent civilisation, to him they mean order, sanity and normality as well as a reflection of a persons character, as shown in his hatred for his nickname ' Piggy'.

He also views names as the greatest concern when they first meet the others, " Piggy moved along the crowd asking names and frowning to remember them" He is a very organized person, he tries to seem confident and calm, he tries to be an adult figure for the boys but inside he is very insecure, " Piggy! Piggy! " " Ralph, please" Piggy, here is almost begging Ralph to stop he hates to be mocked and this upsets him a lot, he wants too fit in but also realizes the need for civilization and these views cause the other boys to dislike him as he seems too them as an adult an intruder in their new world.

They don't want to be overrun with rules; they want to have fun but Piggy, as the most intelligent of the three central characters, views the rules as useful tools for survival. He views all aspects of the boys' behavior on the island in terms of whether it will contribute to their eventual rescue. This in a way makes him partially a hero he knows the reaction he will get from the boys when he tries to instill some sort of order but still tries, he ultimately just wants to help. Piggy remains an outsider to the boys throughout, he is set up as a martyr figure trying his hardest but never actually fitting in.

This is mainly due to his grounded concerns and ideas. The other boys loathe him for this. " How can you expect to be rescued when you don't put first things first and act proper? " When Piggy suggests that the boys build a sundial they mock him, this is quite hurtful to Piggy as he doesn't seem to understand why they hate him so much and still tries to win their approval by suggesting to them what he thinks are good ideas. In this sense piggy is a hero no matter what they say or do he always tries, for example when he

tries too get his glasses back. This is entirely out of character for Piggy but he tries.

Regrettably what Piggy does , to me, seems self-centered, he says and suggests things in order to impress and gain approval from the other boys, the main objective of all he says seems to be to emphasize his intellectual superiority to the boys although rather than impressing this serves as an irritation to the boys. Piggy stands apart from the other boys, for he exists altogether as a member of civilized society. His hair does not even seem to grow; therefore he retains the appearance of a normal English schoolboy, as the others grow more dishevelled and unkempt.

Piggy is a very un-childlike character in this novel he is the only character who completely dismisses the idea of a beast on the island, and even reassures the generally unwavering Ralph on this point. It is Piggy who realizes that the boys' fear is the only danger that they truly face, and even this fear proves no actual threat to them. However, the outcast Piggy once again is ignored in favour of stories of beasts and ghosts; although he is consistently correct in his judgments, Piggy is consistently ignored. He raises the important question whether the boys will act like humans, savages or animals.

However in my opinion Piggy is not a true hero, in some ways his actions can be heroic, such as when he asks for his glasses back, but this was an entirely selfish although brave act. To me, a hero is someone who does something for others and not themselves and Piggy does not fulfill this ideal. Piggy was an important figure in this story, without him Ralph would never have

discovered the conch and many other valuable ideas, but Piggys intellect although useful does not make him a hero. The first sign of disturbance within the seemingly peaceful island is the appearance of Jack and his choir.

Golding portrays Jack and his companions as militaristic and aggressive, with Jack's bold conduct and the choir marching in step with one another.. Jack seems a physical materialization of evil: with his dark cloak and wild red hair, he gives a slightly Satanic impression. He orders his choir as if they were troops, allowing room for neither discussion nor rebellion. The role that he first chooses for his choir is as hunters; he chooses the task which is most violent and, in this society, most related to military values. However, as his inability to kill the pig shows, Jack is not yet accustomed to violence.

Golding indicates that Jack must prepare himself to commit a violent act, for he still constrained by societal rules that oppose this behavior; his controlling attitude has given him a tendency to violence, but he must get rid of the lessons of society before he can kill. quote It is Jack who first oversteps the boundaries of civilized society. His attempts to successfully hunt become, in effect, attempts to submit this animalistic nature. For Jack hunting is not a natural talent, but rather a skill that he continues to develop as the story unfolds.

His motives for hunting are disturbing. He hunts not for the purpose of gaining food to eat, but more for his personal enjoyment. Golding indicates that there is something tremendously dangerous in Jack's obsession; he approaches madness when he speaks about his desire to kill although earlier on in the story he proves not yet ready to , but he is approaching the point at

which he can inflict violence upon another, whether a pig or another boy. His painted face, as a hunter, means to make him impossible to tell apart from the animals of the forest.

When Jack finally does kill a pig, as he has intended to do since the beginning of the novel, he succumbs to his blood lust. The other hunters share this quality; when they dance and sing about killing the pig, they show that they have enjoyed the thrill of violence. They enjoy the slaughter; this goes beyond enjoyment to lust, as they cheer on the means by which they mutilate the pig. Jack's whole view on the situation is definitely not one of a hero, he claims to be doing what he does for the good of the other boys, but ultimately his violent nature takes over and he is controlled seemingly only by his want for blood.

Jack feigns an interest in the rules of order established on the island, but enjoys them only if they imply a possibility for inflicting punishment. Instead, he comes to represent anarchy, overthrowing Ralph's ordered rule for an anarchic state based on pure fulfillment of self-interest. Simon is the obviously the most thoughtful character in the novel, he has a deep connection with nature and often walks alone in the jungle. There are strong religious overtones to the area that Simon finds while on one of these walks, with its ' candle-buds' and ' serene' stillness, it resembles a place of worship.

The open space that Simon finds in the jungle is an indication that the boys do find themselves in an Eden. Simon views the jungle as a place of beauty and tranquility, in comparison to Jack, who sees only the dangers that the boys face. Simon feels at peace with nature and thinks of it more on a

spiritual basis. " Holding his breath he cocked a critical at the sounds of the island" While Piggy represents the intellectual and Ralph the moral aspects of humanity, Simon, I believe, represents the spiritual side of human nature. Like Piggy, he is an outcast, for the other boys think of him as odd and insane.

At one point in the novel I do believe that Simon did descend into insanity. " The Lord Of The Flies spoke in the voice of a schoolmaster. ' This is gone far enough. My poor misguided child. Do you think you know better than I do? '" Simon thinks of the pig's head (The Lord Of The Flies) as the symbol of their descent from civilized behavior to animalistic savagery. It is because of the pig's head that Simon realizes that nature can be brutal and horrifying, an idea that clashes with his previous love of nature and the spirituality inbuilt in it.

Simon frames nature in terms of its how like Eden it is, but the Lord of the Flies is a challenge of that view. It is Simon who finds the beast and realizes that it is only a dead pilot, but when he attempts to tell the other boys they think that he is the beast himself and murder him in panic. The two outcasts both die when they shatter the illusions held by the other boys. Simon dies when he exposes the truth about the nonexistent beast, while the hunters kill Piggy when he forces them to see their behavior as barbaric and irresponsible.

In this aspect Simon could be seen as a hero he spoke of what he saw and was murdered for contradicting the others beliefs. He wanted, in a way, to help them, to stop them being afraid . Although he died completely innocent

and a martyr this in my view doesn't necessarily make him a hero, he didn't do anything brave, he wasn't standing up for what he believed or doing anything he needed courage for. Simon never expected the reaction he received he didn't expect the frenzy that greeted him so never really needed to be heroic.

In conclusion I don't think there are really any heroes in Lord Of The Flies, although many of them did what they thought was best in their own way. They try to do what is right but they are only children and away from the guidance and love of their parents and the civilization of the world they came from the collapse of the Eden like world they had created at the beginning of the novel was inevitable and they found themselves alone and frightened. It was then they showed that none could ever be heroes. Although they were young and in many cases brave, none, I think, showed the true qualities of a hero.