

Study Questions for Lord of the Flies

Chapter One

1. What is the chapter entitled “The Sound of the Shell”?
2. What is Ralph’s attitude toward Piggy in the first chapter?
3. What is the significance of Piggy’s plea to join the expedition?
4. Why is Ralph elected chief?
5. What is the “scar” that is repeatedly mentioned?
6. Why is Jack unable to kill the pig?
7. What do Piggy, Simon, and the littlun with the birthmark have in common?
8. How is Jack presented to the reader?
9. Why did Golding use British schoolboys?
10. How is Piggy revealed as most closely tied to the world of adults?
11. How is Piggy indirectly responsible for the blowing of the conch?

Chapter Two

1. What question does the littlun with the birthmark raise?
2. How do Ralph and Jack answer the question about the beast?
3. What is the significance of the chapter’s title, “Fire on the Mountain”?
4. How do they start the fire

Chapter Three

1. What is the significance of the title, “Huts on the Beach”?
2. Why does Ralph reproach Jack?
3. What two groups with differing goals are emerging?
4. Why does Simon go to his bower?

Chapter Four

1. What is the significance of the title “Painted Faces and Long Hair”?
2. Why does Roger, throwing stones at the littluns, aim just to miss?
3. What definite stand does Ralph make?
4. Why does Jack refuse to give Piggy meat?

Chapter Five

1. What is the significance of the title “Beast from Water”?
2. What is the paradox of the boys’ attitude toward the beast?
3. Why does Ralph call a meeting?
4. Why does Piggy dissuade Ralph from giving up his position as chief?

Chapter Six

1. What is the irony of the dead parachutist landing on the mountain?
2. Why is Simon the only one to doubt the existence of a beast?
3. Why do Ralph and Jack both insist on going after the beast?
4. Why does Jack say that they don’t need the conch any longer?

Chapter Seven

1. Why does Simon tell Ralph that “you” will get back all right?
2. What happens when Ralph wounds the boar?
3. What does Ralph ask Jack?
4. Why do the boys run from the dead chutist?

Chapter Eight

1. Why do the boys refuse to vote for Jack as chief but slip off to join him later?

2. What does Jack tell his new tribe?
3. Why is the killing of the sow discussed in such detail?
4. What does the Lord of the Flies tell Simon?

Chapter Nine

1. What reason does Ralph give for the boys' defection to Jack?
2. What kind of leader is Jack?
3. How does Jack propose to rule without the conch?
4. Why do Ralph and Piggy join the dance?
5. Why is Simon's dead body carried out to sea in terms of glorification?

Chapter Ten

1. What is the significance of the title "The Shell and the Glasses"?
2. Why do Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric lie about their part in Simon's death, or use the darkness as an excuse?
3. How is Wilfred punished?
4. How does Jack account for the death of Simon?

Chapter Eleven

1. Why do Ralph and Piggy decide to visit Jack's camp?
2. What is the reaction of Jack's tribe to Ralph's talk of rescue?
3. What happens when Piggy holds up the conch and tries to talk?
4. Why does Roger shove his way past Jack, only just managing not to edge him aside?

Chapter Twelve

1. How does Ralph learn of Jack's plans for him?
2. What does Ralph say to the twins when they refuse to help him?
3. Does Ralph understand why he must be killed?
4. What is the irony of Samneric's behavior?
5. How does the author describe Ralph's flight across the island?
6. What is the irony of the fire?
7. Why is Percival unable to remember his name and address?
8. Why is Piggy's fall emphasized?
9. Why does Ralph say that he is in charge on the island?
10. What comparison is implied at the end of the novel?

Discussion Questions

An Examination of Motivation

1. When the story opens, what is Ralph's attitude toward the island?
2. What forces begin to act upon him?
3. What is his attitude toward Jack?
4. How does this attitude change?
5. What is his opinion of the "beast" when it is first mentioned?
6. How does Ralph change his opinion?
7. What are the two forces pulling at Ralph?
8. Which of these two forces becomes strongest in the end?

An Examination of Symbolism

1. In what way is the novel an allegory of the Garden of Eden?
2. Trace the development of Simon as a Christ-figure.
3. What is the meaning of "Lord of the Flies"?
4. What is the significance of Piggy's glasses?

An Examination of Philosophy

1. Contrast Ralph and Jack as representatives of opposing political forces.
2. Contrast Ralph and Jack as representatives of spiritual forces.
3. Note the casual way in which Ralph gives Jack control of the army. Compared this with the manner in which many German intellectuals and politicians accepted Hitler's Nazi thugs as unimportant to the national life and irrelevant to the national character. What is Golding's implied comment on our attitude toward brute force?
4. Is Golding totally pessimistic? Do you agree with him?