

Lord of the Flies - Study Guide and Discussion Questions

CHAPTER 1

1. Describe the circumstances surrounding the boys arriving on the island. How did the boys end up there, and what was the political climate at the time?
2. Describe the tone and the mood at the beginning of the novel. Find specific passages to support your answers.
3. Describe the character of Ralph. What details of his personality traits and physical description stand out to the reader?
4. Describe the character of Piggy. How does his nickname and physical description potentially move the plot early in the novel?
5. Examine the potential symbolism of the conch shell. What could the shell symbolize? Be specific in your answer.
6. Describe the character of Jack. How does his arrival mark a change in the plot?
7. How is Jack elected the leader of the boys? Examine this idea carefully and explain the political system the boys have elected to use.
8. Discuss the ideas of civility and barbarianism that exist in the first chapter of the novel.

CHAPTER 2

1. What rules and regulations have the boys established at the beginning of Chapter 2? How does this play into the overall theme of the story to this point?
2. Piggy is fearful in this section of the book. Describe the fears that Piggy brings up and examine how this plays into the story.
3. Analyze the details surrounding the younger boy going missing. How do the boys react to this development? Why?
4. How has the idea of civilization shifted from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2?
5. Who is the protagonist here? Antagonist? Why?

CHAPTER 3

1. What is Jack doing at the beginning of this chapter? How does this play into his characterization and the overall theme of the story? Ironically, what is Ralph doing at the same time? Elaborate.
2. What tone is being created in this section of the novel? What division is being created between the boys?
3. Where does Simon end up at the end of the chapter? How is this part of the island described? Why do you think this description is being offered here?
4. Examine the personal conflict between Ralph and Jack in this chapter. How could this conflict foreshadow the rest of the book?
5. Discuss the idea of “human purpose” as seen by the two main characters here. How does Jack view humanity? Ralph?

CHAPTER 4

1. How is the setting depicted at the beginning of Chapter 4? What is the daily life like on the island at this point in the novel?
2. Discuss the idea of “visions” or “bad dreams” in the novel. Who is affected by these visions?
3. What role do Roger and Maurice play in this section of the book? Analyze their characterization and potential role later in the story.
4. Describe the reaction of various characters to killing the pig. How does this play into the conflict examined earlier in the story?
5. How is power and control divided on the island? Describe the political system that has been established here.

CHAPTER 5

1. What is Ralph analyzing at the beginning of the chapter? What does this tell us about his character?
2. What are the littluns afraid of? What could “the beast” symbolize?
3. How do Jack and the hunters react to the fear expressed on the beach? How does this fear affect Ralph?

CHAPTER 6

1. Describe what has happened to Ralph’s control of power in this chapter. How do the other boys seem to be reacting to Ralph and his system of rules?
2. What does Jack ask Ralph in front of the other boys? How does this question affect the balance of power on the island?

3. What is the author's purpose in adding the dead parachutist to the story? What does this remind us as readers?
4. What is going on in the "outside world" while the boys are on the island? How does this add to the theme of the story?

CHAPTER 7

1. How does Ralph feel about the rest of the boys as Chapter 7 opens? How does Simon attempt to console Ralph?
2. Discuss the symbolic nature of the ocean at the beginning of this chapter. What could the ocean represent here?
3. Describe in detail the pig hunt that takes place in Chapter 7. What is different about this hunt?
4. What terrifying discovery do the boys make at the end of the chapter? What could this be symbolic of? What could this foreshadow?
5. Discuss Ralph's character shift in this chapter? What is happening to Ralph?
6. Describe the instincts the boys are using throughout Chapter 7. How does this tie into the theme of savagery versus civilization?

CHAPTER 8

1. At the beginning of Chapter 8, the boys are frightened of "the beast". What could the beast represent symbolically?
2. Describe Jack in this chapter. How does he react to Ralph's control of power on the island? How do Jack's actions potentially impact the rest of the story?
3. Describe Simon's confrontation with the "Lord of the Flies". What is the "Lord of the Flies"? What could this symbolize?

CHAPTER 9

1. What does Simon discover at the beginning of the chapter?
2. What is Jack's role during the feast on the beach? What does Jack physically look like by this point in the novel?
3. Describe what happens to Simon when he enters the feast.
4. Analyze the importance of "the beast" figure. Why is the idea of "the beast" critical to Jack holding on to his power position on the island?
5. Describe the storm that hits at the end of the chapter. How does the storm impact the events of Chapter 9?

CHAPTER 10

1. Describe Ralph and Piggy's reaction to Simon's death. How does each character deal with what has happened?
2. By this point in the novel, what has happened to the balance of power on the island? Which character is now in control over the island?
3. Describe what is happening at Castle Rock. What type of leadership is Jack displaying? How does this play into the overall theme of the novel?
4. What is stolen from Piggy at the end of the chapter? How is this act of thievery symbolic?

CHAPTER 11

1. Describe in detail what happens when Jack and Ralph's tribes come together in direct conflict.
2. What two major symbols are destroyed in this section of the novel?
3. What has happened to Ralph by the end of the chapter? How is this an ironic twist from the beginning of the novel?

CHAPTER 12

1. Why has Jack set the jungle on fire in this chapter? What was the result of this action?
2. Describe the irony at the end of the novel. What ironic twists are evident as the boys are rescued by the naval officer?
3. Describe the boys' reaction to being rescued? How do they react? How is this another ironic twist?