

William Golding

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***Lord of the Flies***

## A Guide to Study

### Chapter One

#### BEFORE READING

##### *Focus Question*

What kind of person is Ralph? Piggy? Jack? How can you tell?

##### *Vocabulary*

motif 12  
mirage 14  
strident 17  
furtive 22

#### AFTER READING

##### *Comprehension Questions*

1. How is the conch important to the story?
2. How does Ralph become leader?
3. Describe the relationship between Ralph and

#### *For Greater Insight*

##### **School Traditions**

The first chapter relates traditions and activities particular to English schoolboys. For example, the choir appears in uniform, typical of schoolchildren in England. Jack also reveals the school tradition of calling younger children by their given names, while older children with more status are called by their family names. The precentor is the leader of the choir.

### Chapter Two

#### BEFORE READING

##### *Focus Question*

What is the first task the boys undertake as a group? what becomes of their work?

##### *Vocabulary*

gesticulate  
induce  
tumult  
pall

#### AFTER READING

##### *Comprehension Questions*

1. What is the first rule established on the island?
2. What role does Piggy play in the starting of the fire?

#### *For Greater Insight*

##### **Adventure Stories**

The boys mention other adventure stories that might typify their experience on the island. One is *Treasure Island*, a novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, in which the proprietor of an inn and her son find a treasure map among the possessions of a deceased guest. The map leads them to a pirate's fortune. Another story the boys mention is *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean*, a novel by Robert Michael Ballantyne in which three boys are stranded on a coral island. They remain moral and resourceful, according to the rules of their society.

# 3

## Chapter Three

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

What do the others on the island think of Simon?

#### *Vocabulary*

inscrutable  
contrite  
antagonism  
incredulous  
tacit

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

1. Contrast Simon's view of the island with Jack's

Describe the relationship between Ralph and Jack. About what do they disagree?

# 4

## Chapter Four

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

What messages does this chapter convey about power?

#### *Vocabulary*

dubious  
belligerence  
charitable  
malevolent

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

1. Why does Roger purposefully miss when he throws stones at Henry?
2. How does Jack's mask allow him to behave differently?
3. Why does the fire go out? What is the result?



#### *For Greater Insight*

##### **An Outsider**

The narrator comments that Piggy is an outsider for several reasons, including his language. This refers to the stereotyping by accent, or local inflection, in Britain. Piggy is obviously less well off and of a lower class (and thus possessing a different accent) than many of the other boys. Remember who raised him and what she does for a living.

## Chapter Five

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

What different ideas are offered to explain the beast?

#### *Vocabulary*

perpetual  
lamentable  
reverence  
expansive  
derisive

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

1. How has Ralph changed since the beginning of the novel?
2. What does Ralph admire about Piggy?
3. Explain how and why the unity between Ralph and Jack has dissolved.

## Chapter Six

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

What “beast” appears in chapter 6?

#### *Vocabulary*

interminable  
relentless  
oppressive  
diffident  
mutinous

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

1. How does the parachutist come to the island?
2. What could the parachutist symbolize?

## Chapter Seven

### BEFORE READING

#### Focus Question

How are the two sides of the island different from each other?

#### Vocabulary

decorum  
crestfallen  
impervious

### AFTER READING

#### Comprehension Questions

1. Describe how and why Ralph's view of hunting changes during the course of chapter 7.
2. What does Golding reveal about Ralph's past in the flashbacks in chapter 7?
3. How do the boys react when they see the "beast"?

### § For Greater Insight

#### Rugger

Ralph refers to rugger, another name for rugby, a form of football played with two teams of thirteen players. Rugby differs from soccer in that players can carry the ball, block with their hands and arms, and tackle opposing players. Rugby is characterized by its continuous action and its limited substitution of players.

The name comes from the game's origins at Rugby, a boy's school in the town of Rugby in central England.

## Chapter Eight

### BEFORE READING

#### Focus Question

Describe how and why the organization of the boys changes in chapter 8.

#### Vocabulary

contemptuous  
rebuke  
sanctity  
fervor

### AFTER READING

#### Comprehension Questions

1. Why does Jack leave the group?
2. What message does the Lord of the Flies convey to Simon? And why Simon?
3. Characterize Jack as a leader.

### § For Greater Insight

#### The Lord of the Flies

The "Lord of the Flies" is a translation of *Ba'alzevuv* (Hebrew: *baal* meaning lord or deity) or *Beelzebub* (Greek)—names for the devil.

## Chapter Nine

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

Explain what happens to Simon and what Golding could mean to symbolize by what happens.

#### *Vocabulary*

corpulent  
derision  
abominable  
phosphorescence

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

1. Describe how and why Ralph's view of hunting changes during the course of chapter 7.
2. What does Golding reveal about Ralph's past in the flashbacks in chapter 7?
3. How do the boys react when they see the "beast"?

## Chapter Ten

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

How do Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric deal with Simon's fate?

#### *Vocabulary*

loathing  
assimilate  
daunted  
composite

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

1. Why does Jack punish Wilfred?
2. How effective is Ralph's group in fighting against Jack and the others who steal the glasses?
3. Why is Ralph pleased when he discovers he still has the conch?

#### § *For Greater Insight*

##### **Reds**

When Ralph mentions that the boys might be taken prisoner by the Reds, he is referring to Communists. The term "red" derives from the color of the Communist flag. This derogatory term for communists was common until the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.

# 11

## Chapter Eleven

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

“Power tends to corrupt,” Lord Acton said, “and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely.” How is Jack’s corrupting power displayed in chapter 11?

#### *Vocabulary*

myopia  
detain  
propitiate

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

1. What is the significance of painted faces?
2. How has Roger changed since the beginning of the novel?
3. What does Golding mean the destruction of the conch to symbolize?

# 12

## Chapter Twelve

### BEFORE READING

#### *Focus Question*

Why does Ralph believe Jack will never leave him alone?

#### *Vocabulary*

acrid  
ululation  
ensconce  
cordon

### AFTER READING

#### *Comprehension Questions*

- 1 Describe how Jack goes about trapping Ralph.
- 2 What is ironic about the boys’ rescue?

# Reviewing the Novel

## AFTER READING



### Shaping Your Response

- 1 Which boy do you think would have made the most effective leader on the island from the beginning? Explain your choice in detail.
- 2 Did Golding sacrifice artistic excellence for the sake of a “happy ending”? Support your response with rich illustration from the text of the novel.
- 3 Could this story really happen? Why or why not?



### Analyzing the Novel

- 1 Explain how knowing that William Golding was a naval officer during World War II helps a reader understand why things happen as they do in *Lord of the Flies*.
- 2 Choose a description from the novel, one you find especially clear and vivid. How does Golding use description to reflect the mood, to reveal characters’ personalities, or to foreshadow events in the novel?
- 3 What elements of fables appear in this novel? How does their appearance affect a reader’s understanding of the events?



### Extending the Ideas

- 1 The novel takes place on a deserted island in an undetermined time. How are the novel and its messages important to people in other places today?
- 2 The Lord of the Flies tells Simon, “Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you?” Challenge or support this view based on what you see in the world.

### General Themes to Consider



#### Good and Evil

What is the nature of good? of evil? What makes an action good? What makes an action evil? Who should decide what makes an action good or evil? What is the source of each?



#### The Social Order

What is the nature of our social contract with one another? What basic agreements do we need to share? Who should make that decision? What should we do with or for those who will not agree to the contract? Who should decide? What major theories of social contract underlie the American system? Who developed and who expressed them? When, and in what works? Which are still valid today?



#### The Individual

What is the nature of the individual: basically good or evil? If good, why do some go “bad”? If evil, why do some end up “good”? Do we have obligations to each other? If so, what are they? And who should decide?