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| **Plot Summary** | **LORD OF THE FLIES by William Golding** |
| 1. The Sound of the Shell | A transport plane carrying a group of English boys is shot down onto an island. Jack and Piggy find a conch shell that they use to call the other boys. No adults survive – only boys aged 6-12. Some boys tease Piggy. Ralph is named leader, and Jack the chief hunter. The hunters find a tangled pig, but Jack finds himself unable to kill it. |
| 2. Fire on the Mountain | It is agreed that whoever has the conch shell at meetings may speak. A young boy claims to have seen some form of ‘beastie’ or monster the night before, which makes the other boys shudder. The older boys try to reassure them. The boys decide to build a fire on the top of the mountain, to alert nearby ships/planes. In their enthusiasm, they accidentally set trees ablaze. A small boy playing near to the trees is now missing. Piggy laments the boys |
| 3. Huts on the Beach | Ralph shares his problems with Jack and Simon – none of the boys are helping to build the huts, the hunters have failed to kill anything, and most of the boys just want to pay. Jack is only bothered about killing animals for food. Jack and Ralph begin to bicker, and become increasingly hostile towards one another. They try to make peace by going for a swim in the lagoon together, but it is clear that their feelings fester. Simon walks in the forest, helping the ‘littluns.’ Eventually he comes to a clearing, which he finds beautiful. |
| 4. Painted Faces and Long Hair | The Littluns become troubled by visions and bad dreams. They continue to talk of the ‘beastie.’ Roger becomes increasingly violent and sadistic towards the littluns. Jack disappears to kill a pig. A ship is seen, but the fire has gone out. Ralph is furious at Jack for this. The hunters return, crazed that they have caught a pig. In the ensuing argument, Jack breaks Piggy’s glasses. Jack eventually accepts his failure, but does not apologise to Piggy. |
| 5. Beast from Water | Jack calls a meeting to bring order. Again, the older boys try to allay fears of the beast. A littlun claims to have seen the beast and Jack claims that he will kill it if he sees it. This sends the boys into manic behaviour and they follow Jack. Ralph thinks of relinquishing control, but Piggy tells him that the boys need guidance. In the next chapter, above the island, there is a brief aerial battle |
| 6. Beast from Air | A dead parachutist falls to the island and becomes caught in the trees. His parachute flaps in the wind. Sam and Eric awake, and see the parachutist – they mistake this for the beast. The boys thus begin an expedition onto the hill to find the beast – the littluns soon become preoccupied with ideas of building a fort. |
| 7. Shadows and Tall Tree | Ralph feels disconsolate about the disorder on the island, but Simon soothes him. The boys find boar droppings, and decide to hunt the boar. Ralph gets caught up in the exhilaration. Later that night, the group recreate the thrill of the chase, and in their excitement almost kill a boy named Robert. Ralph, Jack, and Roger climb up to the summit of the mountain and see what they think is the beast (the parachutist flapping in the wind). They hurry down the mountain to warn the other boys. |
| 8. Gift for the Darkness | The boys return claiming to have seen the beast, to Piggy’s bemusement Jack says Ralph is a coward who should be removed as Chief, but the others won’t vote him out. Jack storms off, creating a new tribe with him as chief. They steal things from Ralph’s tribe. Simon, alone, sees a pig’s head, swarming with flies. In an apparition, it taunts him. He faints. |
| 9. A View to a Death | Simon wakes in a daze, and staggers around. He sees the parachutist, and realises the boys’ mistake. He rushes down to tell them that the beast does not exist. At Jack’s tribe, a feast is held – all except Simon are present. Jack sits with a painted face on a throne, issuing commands. He issues an invitation to all of Ralph’s tribe to join his own – most accept. They begin a wild tribal dance. At this point Simon comes down from the forest. Mistaking him in the dark as the beast, the boys kill him in their wild frenzy. It is swept into the ocean, as a storm begins, and the parachutist is swept off the cliff. |
| 10. The Shell and the Glasses | Almost all have joined Jack’s tribe. Ralph and Piggy awake, feeling ashamed. At Castle Rock, Jack rules with absolute power – acting brutally to those in the tribe. He states that Ralph’s tribe are a danger. Jack’s tribe attack and badly beat Ralph and his tribe. They steal Piggy’s glasses, which are the only way of making fire on the island. |
| 11. Castle Rock | Ralph’s tribe travel to Castle Rock to try and make the others see reason. Jack and Ralph square off, and Sam and Eric are accosted by Jack’s tribe. Piggy tries to make his voice heard, but Roger pushes a huge boulder down the cliff, knocking Piggy to his death. Ralph narrowly escapes with his life, whilst Sam and Eric are tortured into joining Jack’s tribe. |
| 12. Cry of the Hunters | In the final chapter, Ralph hides in the jungle. Jack plans to send the whole tribe after him to kill him. Smelling smoke, Ralph realises Jack has set the forest on fire to smoke him out. His pursuers, armed with spears, are close to catching and killing him when a naval officer appears, having seen the smoke. He laments their lack of civilisation.**Key Terms**Adventure NovelAllegory AuthoritarianBeelzebubDarwinismDictatorDictatorshipDramatic IronyDystopianFableEgo/Super Ego/IdHierarchyHuman NatureMaslow’s Hierarchy of NeedsMicrocosmOriginal Sin**Key Quotations** ‘Next time there would be no mercy. He looked round fiercely,’ (Jack)daring them to contradict.”*“*They walked along, two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate.”‘Maybe there is a beast…maybe it’s only us’‘The mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.’‘They walked along, two continents of experience and feeling unable to communicate.” (Jack and Ralph) ‘Life… is scientific’ (Piggy) ‘Which is better, law and rescue, OR hunting and breaking things up?’ (Piggy)  ‘I have the conch, I have a right to speak’ (Piggy) ‘Desire to squeeze and hurt was over-mastering’ (about Ralph) ‘Roger’s arm was conditioned by a civilisation that knew nothing of him and was in ruins.’ ‘Fancy thinking the beast was something you could hunt and kill!’ (The Pig’s head to Simon)‘The tearing of teeth and claws’ (when the boys kill Simon) ‘His fat, his ass-mar, his matter of fact ideas: Piggy was a bore’‘Exploded into a thousand pieces’ (the Conch after Piggy’s death) ‘Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart, and the fall through the air of a true, wise friend called Piggy.’ ‘Kill the pig, Cut his throat, Bash him in!’(Jack’s chant)“There isn’t anyone to help you. Only me. And I’m the Beast. . .” (Lord of the Flies to Simon) ‘You’re a beast and a swine and a bloody, bloody thief!’ (Ralph to Jack) ‘Stick sharpened at both ends’ (Roger)Postlapsarian TotalitarianTyrannicalTyrantUtopian**Key Themes**Democracy vs. DictatorshipCivilisation vs. Savagery Innocence‘The Beast’ –primal instinct of savagery that lies within each of the boys. The evil within all.The Weak and the StrongGood vs EvilHuman Nature |
| **Context** | **Characters and Symbols** |
| **William Golding** was born on September 19, 1911, in Cornwall, England. Golding pursued the natural sciences until switching to English Literature at university. He served in the navy in WWII, before becoming a teacher and writer. Lord of the Flies, which was published in 1954, was his first and biggest success.**The Coral Island**: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean (1858) is a novel written by Scottish author R.M. Ballantyne. It tells of 3 boys marooned on a pacific island; the only survivors of a shipwreck. In the book, the children encounter different types of evil, yet their growing friendship, courage, and determination aid them in survival. Written around 100 years earlier, it nevertheless inspired Lord of the Flies: Golding was unsatisfied with how it ‘espoused myths’ and sought to invert its meanings (the evil is instead within the boys.**Religion** – Lord of the Flies was written in the mid-twentieth century, a period of great discovery and scientific advancement. Aspects of life that were previously attributed to being religious or supernatural phenomena were now being explained in some part by science. In Lord of the Flies, Golding explores some of the fundamental issues that science could not fully explain, for example human sin and the conflict between internal good and evil.**World War II** – World War II was the largest and deadliest conflict in human history. Involving all of the major developed nations in the world, the war pitted the Allied countries against the Axis powers (led by Hitler’s Nazi Germany). In total, between 50 and 80 million people died, leaving a catastrophic effect the world over. Golding served in the navy, and participated in the invasion of Normandy. It had a profound effect on his view of the evils of which humanity was capable.Philosophical and Scientific Theorists: Maslow/Freud/Darwin | **Ralph – order and democracy: the civilizing impact of human beings****Piggy – pragmatic, intellectual and mature in attitude. Logic****Jack – savagery. He becomes wild and barbaric, ruling through authoritarian and totalitarian means.****Simon- sensitivity, spirituality and kindness. Wisdom.** **Roger - cruel and sadistic boy. Antithesis of Simon.****Conch – civilization and democracy****Piggy’s glasses – science and technology****Fire – hope of salvation** **The Beast – human nature (the desire to be a savage)****The scar – Mankind’s destructive influence on Paradise.** **The Lord of the Flies (pig’s head) – physical manifestation of the beast****Adults – civilization and social order****Religious Allegory****The island = Garden of Eden****The scar = how man destroys paradise (the Fall of Man)****Simon = Jesus Christ** **Castle Rock = Purgatory. A place of suffering for sinners.****The Sea = Heaven**Golding as a fabulist: fable = a short story, typically with animals as characters, conveying a moral. Golding wrote “The fabulist is a moralist. He cannot make a story without a human lesson tucked away in it.”**War allegory****Piggy = the Jews; victimized, vulnerable****Jack = Nazi leader; manipulates and bully** |