

## Lord of the Flies - Chapter 1: The Sound of the Shell

### Synopsis:

Ralph and Piggy meet on the island. Ralph is insulting and unfriendly to the "fat boy." Ralph is excited at being on an island where there are no grown-ups and he is free to do as he wishes. The island is described delicately and beautifully: "shimmering water", "dazzling beach and water", "tiny, glittering fish." They find a shell - a "conch" as Piggy explains to Ralph. The conch, like the island, is beautiful: "the shell was deep cream." /"... touched here and there with fading pink."/"a gleaming tusk." Ralph, instructed by Piggy (whom he despises), blows the conch to call other survivors who are on the island. Boys respond to the call and move towards Ralph and Piggy. A note of darkness is introduced by a party of choirboys led by Jack Merridew, an arrogant and unpleasant fellow. Ralph is elected leader. Ralph, Jack, and a "batty" boy, Simon, set out to explore the island. Jack cannot (at this stage) bring himself to kill a pig. His desire for violence, his blood lust, is still held in check by the rules of society.

Page No*		Quote	Comment
Pig's head	Boy's head		
8	2	"No grown-ups!"	Ralph's reaction to being alone on island - delighted at freedom presented by lack of adult control
9	3	"The fat boy wanted to be asked his name... but this proffer of acquaintance was not made"	Ralph's behaviour to Piggy shows his indifference to Piggy and Piggy's sensitive and proper nature.
9		"I was the only boy in our school what had asthma ... I've been wearing specs since I was three"	Piggy is proud of what other's perceive as his weaknesses.
10	5	"eyes that proclaimed no devil"	Ralph is inherently good character - early signal.
11	5	"We ought to have a meeting"	Piggy's sensible and rational statement demonstrates early on that he is logical and intelligent = realises need for practical approach to situation.
11/12	6	"Ralph shrieked with laughter... Piggy! Piggy!"	Ralph's insensitive reaction to Piggy confession of his nickname - Ralph lacks awareness of Piggy as person with feelings.
14	8	"I can't swim. I wasn't allowed. My asthma" "I could swim when I was five. Daddy taught me"	Two contrasting statements from Piggy & Ralph. Show different characteristics of boys. Piggy - restricted, closeted. Ralph- free, energetic.

14	8	"Sucks to your ass-mar"	Disparaging offhand comment from Ralph again showing lack of compassion for Piggy.
15	10	"We've got to find the others. We've got to do something"	Piggy is yet again sensible. Level headed and rational.
16	11	"It's a shell. I see one like that before" "We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting."	Discovery of the conch - Piggy cleverly identifies it and its use (later becomes symbol of democracy).
20	15	"They saw that the darkness was not all shadow... the creature was a party of boys"	Arrival of the choir - termed as 'creature' hint of sinister/evil
21	16	"His face was crumpled and freckled, and ugly without stillness"	Description of Jack - contrast to fair-haired Ralph - Jack bossy and dispassionate
22	17	"Why should I be Jack? I'm Merridew"	Jack has sense of superiority and arrogance about him.
23	17	"Shut up, Fatty"	Jack's reaction to Piggy - is cruel and dismissive
23	17	"his real name's Piggy!"	Ralph betrays Piggy - group laugh and Piggy feels like an outsider - unkind action
23	18	"I ought to be chief," said Jack with simple arrogance"	Jack confident and full of himself
23	18	"There was a slight, furtive boy... who kept to himself with an inner intensity of avoidance and secrecy"	First description of Simon - very private, strange boy - removed from group - initially member of choir.
24	18	"This toy of voting was almost as pleasing as the conch" "I'm chief then"	Boys playing with idea of democracy - accept ideals of civilised society.
24	19	"what intelligence had been shown... there was the conch"	Passage where Golding muses on who is most suitable leader - Piggy has brains, Jack has front but Ralph has presence & power (symbolised by him holding the conch).
26	21/22	"Better Piggy than Fatty," he said... with the directness of genuine leadership"	Ralph doesn't apologise to Piggy for telling the group his nickname - is firm.
28	23/24	"Wacco."	Boys think exploration of island is fun - like a game.

		"Wizard." "Smashing."	Also note use of dated slang - identifies them as middle class public/private schoolboys.
30	25	"The great rock loitered... smashed a deep hole in the canopy of the forest... the forest further down shook as with the passage of an enraged monster..." "Like a bomb!"	Island is described very prettily - lots of references to pink, icing - highlight unreality of setting. Boys disturb perfection - man destroying nature - monsters of civilisation - the evil that destroys.
31	26	"This belongs to us"	Arrogance of man - thinks he can control and dominate nature.
32	27	"they savoured the right of domination. They were lifted up: were friends"	Group appear happy and unified in their supremacy over passive island
32	27	"Hunt. Catch things...until they fetch us"	Jack has primeval instinct to hunt and kill but also still has hope of survival at this early stage - all just short-term adventure until adult world claims them.
33	28	"The pause was only long enough for them to understand what an enormity the downward stroke would be"	Conscience of man over destruction of another living creature - reality of hunting a shock to them at this stage (contrast to end of book).
33	29	"I was choosing a place"	Jack is humiliated and frustrated over his inability to kill as he has made such a thing of 'hunting' - is still little boy not strong man.
34	29	"because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood"	Sanctity of flesh still observed - aren't supposed to kill - boys still civilised observing rules of basic humanity - aren't savages. Symbolism of blood/red as danger/death (contrast to end of book).
34	29	"next time there would be no mercy"	Jack is determined to prove himself capable of slaughter - is vicious and dangerous.

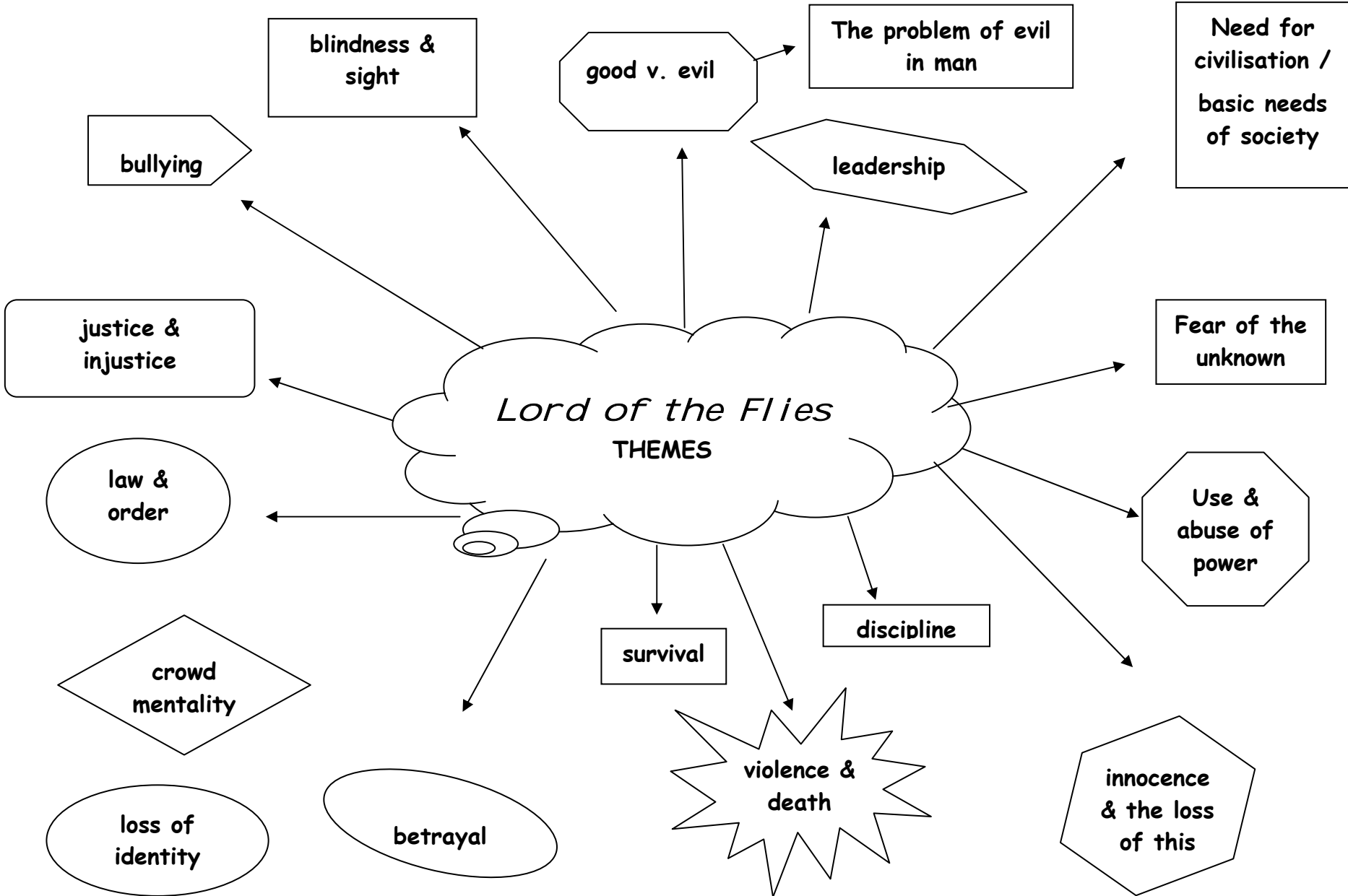
\* Faber & Faber editions

**Themes:**

**Friendship:** "Jack and Ralph smiled at each other with shy liking."

**Beauty of the island** in its natural state: conch, Candle buds

**Violence:** Jack's frustration: "Next time ---!"





## LOTF: speaking & listening activity

- Work in pairs
- Choose one of the activities from the choices below and prepare a talk
- The aim is to **EXPLAIN** and **DISCUSS** the issues related to LOTF
- **Remember to:**
  1. show depth of understanding & make thought provoking contributions
  2. use appropriate & varied English
  3. practise your talk : be prepared
  4. listen to each other and work well together
  5. talk fluently
  6. sustain interest of audience

Choose ONE of the following:

### **CHARACTER STUDY:**

Choose one character     Ralph Jack Piggy Simon

Focus on how they develop i.e. what they are like at the start of the novel, what they are like at the end of the novel. Highlight & discuss key moments & key quotes. Also consider personal opinion - do you both agree?

### **THEME ANALYSIS**

Choose ONE/TWO (you can combine closely related ones) from themes OHT.

Focus on how theme develops i.e. where it emerges in the novel, how it progresses, and any characters who embody it. Consider reason for the theme - why is it included in the novel, purpose? Think about the personal impact of theme on you - do you both agree?

### **SPECIFIC CHAPTER FOCUS**

Choose one chapter - take note of chapter title. Highlight key characters, actions, themes, key quotes etc. Relate all these to the novel's plot i.e. relate it to novel as a whole. Also consider the reasons why issues/themes occur - purpose? Think about personal opinion of chapter - do you both agree?

### **USE OF LANGUAGE**

Investigate how Golding uses language - you could select a couple of chapters to focus on or look at how his description of the island changes. Focus on his use of language devices such as alliteration, repetition, similes etc. Pick out specific examples and explain their impact. Remember to discuss the effects he creates when using specific language.

### **AUTHORIAL PURPOSE**

Tackle the 'bigger picture' - look at the events of the novel in macrocosm. What is Golding trying to say to his readers? Discuss what you think he is saying about civilisation, humanity and democracy. Also focus in on the contemporary relevance of his views - relate them to our lives today. Try and explore a variety of ideas.

# ***LORD OF THE FLIES***

The novel can be separated into 3 distinct parts:

## **Part 1 - innocent boys on beautiful island**

Arrive → assembly → early decisions about what to do → emphasis on island as paradise → hope of rescue → pleasure of day to day events.

All these things are contained within the rules of law, order and sense. Strong sense of the forbidden and what is right and wrong. For example:

- Jack can't kill the pig because 'the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into the living flesh; because of the unbearable blood'
- Roger throws stones at Henry but he throws to miss because 'round the squatting boy was the protection of parents, and school, and policeman, and the law.'

The change in this situation occurs when the expected controls (of parents, teachers etc) are not in place and the games run on and no one stops them.

## **Part 2 - threat and fear appear**

- With the arrival of the dead airman comes a physical threat - fear becomes real.
- Destruction occurs → this destruction is caused by the boys' actions → fire = death, conch = failure of democracy / fairness → order is destroyed.
- Beginning of the idea that they have evil within them. For example Simon's realisation that 'what I mean is... maybe it's only us'
- Evil has been created on the island → this fact is established with the killing of Simon (the airman is no longer needed to symbolise evil at this point so he disappears).

## **Part 3 - consequences of creating evil**

- Moral anarchy is unleashed by murder of Simon → Rule and order is destroyed → Piggy's death, torture, hunting of Ralph, and Ralph's will to kill or be killed.

- Boys lose individual identity and become a mass / mob, for example: Jack is now called 'the Chief'.
- All of this is not a dream, but a reality. This is made clear when the naval officer appears to remind us how far removed they are from the normal expectations of British public school boys. It is also underlined by Ralph's own realisation about loss of innocence and that darkness of man's hearts.
- Only hope that the end of the novel is that Ralph has learnt something from his experiences on the island and has survived. The hope is that he will carry this knowledge back to civilisation and save it from itself.

## Other ideas

The novel is an examination of what human nature is really like.

The novel examines reality and deception and points to the terrifying gap between these two states.

It was written in 1954 - the world had seen the following events:

- The systematic destruction of the Jewish race
- World wars revealing unnumbered atrocities of what man had done to man
- In 1945 the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb

Golding explores the doctrine of original sin - religious idea that we are all capable of evil - it is inherent in our nature (all Eve's fault as she took the apple off the tree of knowledge - the snake tempted her).

He also explores how both power and man corrupts everything they come into contact with. For example, the destruction of the island when the fire gets out of control.