

Lord of the Flies

Prof: Luma Ibrahim (PhD)

المرحلة الرابعة



In the midst of a raging war, a plane evacuating a group of schoolboys from Britain is shot down over a deserted tropical island. Two of the boys, **Ralph** and **Piggy**, discover a conch shell on the beach, and Piggy realizes it could be used as a horn to summon the other boys. Once assembled, the boys set about electing a leader and devising a way to be rescued. They choose Ralph as their leader, and Ralph appoints another boy, **Jack**, to be in charge of the boys who will hunt food for the entire group.

Ralph, Jack, and another boy, **Simon**, set off on an expedition to explore the island. When they return, Ralph declares that they must light a signal fire to attract the attention of passing ships. The boys succeed in igniting some dead wood by focusing sunlight through the lenses of Piggy's eyeglasses. However, the boys pay more attention to playing than to monitoring the fire, and the flames quickly engulf the forest. A large swath of dead wood burns out of control, and one of the youngest boys in the group disappears, presumably ha. In the midst of a raging war, a plane

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At first, the boys enjoy their life without grown-ups and spend much of their time splashing in the water and playing games. Ralph, however, complains that they should be maintaining the signal fire and building huts for shelter. The hunters fail in their attempt to catch a wild pig. In the midst of a raging war, a plane evacuating a group of schoolboys from Britain is shot down over a deserted tropical island. Two of the boys, Ralph and Piggy, discover a conch shell on the beach, and Piggy realizes it could be used as a horn to summon the other boys. Once assembled, the boys set about electing a leader and devising a way to be rescued. They choose Ralph as their leader, and Ralph appoints another boy, Jack, to be in charge of the boys who will hunt food for the entire group.

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When a ship passes by on the horizon one day, Ralph and Piggy notice, to their horror, that the signal fire—which had been the hunters' responsibility to maintain—has burned out. Furious, Ralph accosts Jack, but the hunter has just returned with his first kill, and all the hunters seem gripped with a strange frenzy, reenacting the chase in a kind of wild dance. Piggy criticizes Jack, who hits Piggy across the face. Ralph blows the conch shell and reprimands the boys in a speech intended to restore order. At the meeting, it quickly becomes clear that some of the boys have started to become afraid. The littlest boys, known as "littluns," have been troubled by nightmares from

the beginning, and more and more boys now believe that there is some sort of beast or monster lurking on the island. The older boys try to convince the others at the meeting to think rationally, asking where such a monster could possibly hide during the daytime. One of the littluns suggests that it hides in the sea—a proposition that terrifies the entire group.

Not long after the meeting, some military planes engage in a battle high above the island. The boys, asleep below, do not notice the flashing lights and explosions in the clouds. A parachutist drifts to earth on the signal-fire mountain, dead. Sam and Eric, the twins responsible for watching the fire at night, are asleep and do not see the parachutist land. When the twins wake up, they see the enormous silhouette of his parachute and hear the strange flapping noises it makes. Thinking the island beast is at hand, they rush back to the camp in terror and report that the beast has attacked them.

The boys organize a hunting expedition to search for the monster. Jack and Ralph, who are increasingly at odds, travel up the mountain. They see the silhouette of the parachute from a distance and think that it looks like a huge, deformed ape. The group holds a meeting at which Jack and Ralph tell the others of the sighting. Jack says that Ralph is a coward and that he should be removed from office, but the other boys refuse to vote Ralph out of power. Jack angrily runs away down the beach, calling all the hunters to join him. Ralph rallies the remaining boys to build a new signal fire, this time on the beach rather than on the mountain. They obey, but before they have finished the task, most of them have slipped away to join Jack.

Jack declares himself the leader of the new tribe of hunters and organizes a hunt and a violent, ritual slaughter of a sow to solemnize the occasion. The hunters then decapitate the sow and place its head on a sharpened stake in the jungle as an offering to the beast. Later, encountering the bloody, fly-covered head, Simon has a terrible vision, during which it seems to him that the head is speaking. The voice, which he imagines as belonging to the Lord of the Flies, says that Simon will never escape him, for he exists within all men. Simon faints. When he wakes up, he goes to the mountain, where he sees the dead parachutist. Understanding then that the beast does not exist externally but rather within each individual boy, Simon travels to the beach to tell the others what he has seen. But the others are in the midst of a chaotic revelry—even Ralph and Piggy have joined Jack's feast—and when they see Simon's shadowy figure emerge from the jungle, they fall upon him and kill him with their bare hands and teeth.

The following morning, Ralph and Piggy discuss what they have done. Jack's hunters attack them and their few followers and steal Piggy's glasses in the process. Ralph's group travels to Jack's stronghold in an attempt to make Jack see reason, but Jack orders Sam and Eric tied up and fights with Ralph. In the ensuing battle, one boy, Roger, rolls a boulder down the mountain, killing Piggy and shattering the conch shell. Ralph barely manages to escape a torrent of spears.

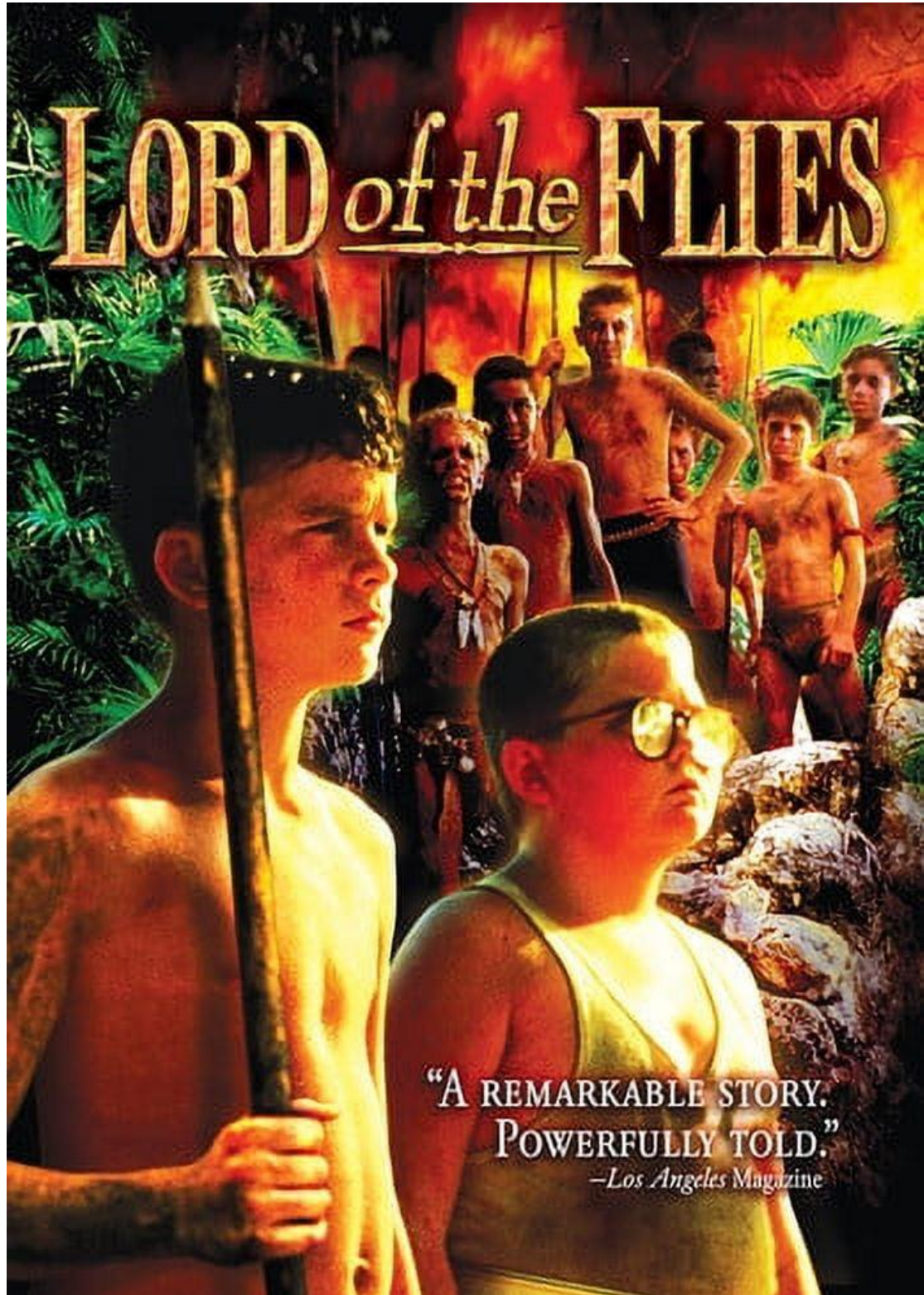
Ralph hides for the rest of the night and the following day, while the others hunt him like an animal. Jack has the other boys ignite the forest in order to smoke Ralph out of his hiding place. Ralph stays in the forest, where he discovers and destroys the sow's head, but eventually, he is forced out onto the beach, where he knows the other boys will soon arrive to kill him. Ralph collapses in exhaustion, but when he looks up, he

sees a British naval officer standing over him. The officer's ship noticed the fire raging in the jungle. The other boys reach the beach and stop in their tracks at the sight of the officer. Amazed at the spectacle of this group of bloodthirsty, savage children, the officer asks Ralph to explain. Ralph is overwhelmed by the knowledge that he is safe but, thinking about what has happened on the island, he begins to weep. The other boys begin to sob as well. The officer turns his back so that the boys may regain their composure.

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The major conflict in *Lord of the Flies* is the struggle between Jack and Ralph. The fight for who will lead the island represents the clash between a peaceful democracy, as symbolized

by Ralph, and a violent dictatorship, as symbolized by Jack. Both boys are potential leaders of the entire group, and though Jack grudgingly accepts Ralph's leadership at first, as the plot develops their rivalry grows and intensifies until it is a struggle to the death. Ralph and Jack (and the boys who align themselves with each) represent different values and different aspects of human nature. Ralph represents respect for the law, duty, reason, and the protection of the weak, whereas Jack represents violence, cruelty, mob rule, government through fear, and tyranny. As we see Ralph's hold over the other boys weaken and crumble until he is cast out and hunted, the story seems to be showing us that humanity's violent and savage impulses are more powerful than civilization, which is inherently fragile. And while Ralph is rescued at the last minute by a representative of civilization in the person of the naval officer, the fact that a global war is taking place underlines the idea that civilization itself is under serious threat from the forces of violence.

Set against the backdrop of global war, the book serves as a caution against the specific consequences of nuclear armament, as well as a broader examination of human nature and the destabilizing presence of man in the natural world. In telling its story through the experience of young boys isolated from the rest of civilization, and making few references to the world outside the confines of the island, the novel creates a sense of inevitability and universality to the specific tale of a small group battling nature and each other. By making the two main characters emblematic of two approaches to society, Golding creates a conflict that seems to lead inexorably to the destruction of one of the characters, but is instead resolved by the surprise introduction of the outside, 'adult' reality. In this way the preceding events act as allegory for the more consequential, and far more dangerous, actions of man beyond the island.

The book opens in the immediate aftermath of the plane crash that lands the boys on the island, so the novel's inciting incident happens offstage. The reader first meets Ralph, who is introduced as graceful and physically appealing, and Piggy, who is presented as Ralph's physical opposite. The boys discover a conch and use it to summon the rest of the survivors of the crash, introducing us to Jack, who appears confident and is already leading a group of boys. The boys vote for Ralph to be the group's chief, despite the fact that "the most obvious leader was Jack," partly because Ralph possesses the conch. Jack reluctantly accepts Ralph's leadership, and the two bond in exploring the island together. Jack asserts himself after the humiliation of losing the vote for chief by slamming his knife into a tree and declaring that he will be a hunter, establishing the boys' primary roles: Ralph will be in charge of communication and working to get them rescued, while Jack will be responsible for hunting for meat. Which of these two roles is more important will be the source of escalating conflict between the two for the remainder of the book.

The rising action of the novel takes place over the following chapters, as each boy on the island establishes his role in the order of the newly formed society, and Jack and Ralph find themselves increasingly at odds over what the group's priorities should be and where they should expend energy. Ralph insists that a signal fire must be maintained constantly in case any ships pass the island, and believes the best use of resources is in collaborative work to watch the fire, build shelters, and gather fruit. Jack discovers a passionate enjoyment of hunting, and allows the signal fire to go out while killing a pig, leading to a clash with Ralph, who has seen a ship pass while the fire was out. The younger boys on the island express growing fears about a beast they believe comes out at night to menace them. In a scene the reader sees but none of the boys witnesses, a paratrooper crashes onto the top of the

mountain, and the boys subsequently mistake his form for the beast, increasing their fears and making them vulnerable to Jack's equation of killing pigs with vanquishing their fears, as their chants change from "kill the pig" to "kill the beast."

After the boys kill Simon in a frenzy of fear and violent excitement, the rift between Jack and Ralph reaches a crisis point, and the climax of the book occurs when Jack and his tribe steal Piggy's glasses, then kill Piggy when he comes to get them back. When Jack's tribe steals the glasses, Ralph and Piggy think they are coming for the conch, but at this point the conch has lost most of its symbolic power, and Jack understands the glasses, which are necessary to start a fire, are the real item of value. This devaluing of the conch suggests that the agreed-upon symbols of democracy and due process no longer apply, and the fragile civilization the boys have forged is imploding. The next day, Piggy and Ralph go to retrieve Piggy's glasses and a member of Jack's tribe releases a large boulder, smashing the conch and killing Piggy. The democracy is demolished, and Jack's despotic monarchy is cemented. Realizing his life is in imminent danger, Ralph flees Jack and his tribe, who have become bloodthirsty and increasingly sadistic under his violent influence.

Up to this point the boys have maintained a fragile balance, with Jack's willingness to enact violence offset by Ralph's control of the means of lighting the fire and the symbolic power conferred by the conch. Once this balance is destroyed, and Jack controls both the means of sustaining the fire and keeping the boys obedient to his rule, Ralph is rendered powerless. Unlike Ralph, who expects the boys to be intrinsically motivated to work together, Jack is willing to exert external influence on boys who disobey him, and leads by force, rather than persuasion. Motivated by a fear of Jack's violence as well as a mob mentality, the boys pursue Ralph across the island, even though he poses no actual threat. Even the twins Samneric, initially sympathetic to Ralph, give themselves over to Jack after he tortures them to reveal Ralph's hiding place. The boys set a fire to flush Ralph out of the jungle, which signals a passing ship. The ship's officer comes on shore, reintroducing civilization, and the boys realize the horrors they have endured and perpetuated. The book ends with the island destroyed, and the boys rescued but scarred by their glimpses into "the darkness of man's heart."

Free from the rules that adult society formerly imposed on them, the boys marooned on the island struggle with the conflicting human instincts that exist within each of them—the instinct to work toward civilization and order and the instinct to descend into savagery, violence, and chaos.

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Rising action The boys assemble on the beach. In the election for leader, Ralph defeats Jack, who is furious when he loses. As the boys explore the island, tension grows between Jack, who is interested only in hunting, and Ralph, who believes most of the boys' efforts should go toward building shelters and maintaining a signal fire. When rumors surface that there is some sort of beast living on the island, the boys grow fearful, and the group begins to divide into two camps supporting Ralph and Jack, respectively. Ultimately, Jack forms a new tribe altogether, fully immersing himself in the savagery of the hunt.

Climax Simon encounters the Lord of the Flies in the forest glade and realizes that the beast is not a physical entity but rather something that exists within each boy on the island. When Simon tries to approach the other boys and convey this message to them, they fall on him and kill him savagely.

Falling action Virtually all the boys on the island abandon Ralph and Piggy and descend further into savagery and chaos. When the other boys kill Piggy and destroy the conch shell, Ralph flees from Jack's tribe and encounters the naval officer on the beach.

Themes Civilization vs. savagery; the loss of innocence; innate human evil

Motifs Biblical parallels; natural beauty; the bullying of the weak by the strong; the outward trappings of savagery (face paint, spears, totems, chants)

Symbols The conch shell; Piggy's glasses; the signal fire; the beast; the Lord of the Flies; Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, and Roger

Foreshadowing Piggy's death is foreshadowed by his physical frailty and dependence on his glasses; fire as a source of conflict is foreshadowed by the first fire the boys set on the island; the boys' eventual rescue is foreshadowed by references to civilization and Simon's prediction.