

Plot

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| Chapter 1 | Stranded on an island, Ralph meets Piggy. Piggy has the idea of using the conch to call survivors together. Jack and his choir turn up. Ralph is elected leader and, with Jack and Simon, explores the island. They find a trapped piglet, but Jack cannot wield the knife. |
| Chapter 2 | At a meeting, Ralph imposes some rules. He is optimistic about rescue, but one little boy mentions seeing a beast. They start a signal fire, using Piggy's glasses, but it spreads out of control. Piggy notices some of the small boys are missing and is frustrated at the mistakes they have made. |
| Chapter 3 | Jack is naked and hunts (unsuccessfully) in the forest. Ralph struggles to build shelters without co-operation and argues with Jack about their priorities. Simon casts doubt on the safety of the island and isolates himself in the jungle. |
| Chapter 4 | The boys divide into 'littluns' and 'biguns'. Roger enjoys tormenting the littluns. Jack paints his face and leads the hunt. Ralph sees a ship but realises the fire has gone out because Jack is hunting. When they return with a dead pig, the boys argue. Jack hits Piggy breaking his glasses. The boys eat the pig. |
| Chapter 5 | Ralph calls a meeting and tries to re-establish the rules. They talk about the existence of the beast and the assembly descends into chaos. Jack opposes Ralph over the importance of rules. |
| Chapter 6 | Sam and Eric alert the boys to a dead parachutist that has landed on the island. Thinking it to be the Beast, the older boys go looking for it. |
| Chapter 7 | Simon reassures Ralph. The boys (including Ralph) unsuccessfully hunt a boar, but then re-enact the hunt on a boy named Robert. Jack, Ralph and Roger find the 'Beast' and run away, terrified. |
| Chapter 8 | Jack calls a meeting to challenge Ralph's leadership, but is defeated. Jack's group separate, and they sadistically kill a pig, much to Roger's enjoyment. Jack's band, naked and painted, raid for fire to cook the pig, tempting some to join him as Chief. Simon has a kind of hallucination and blacks out. |
| Chapter 9 | Simon sees the dead parachutist and realises the truth. Apart from Ralph and Piggy, all are feasting with Jack. Ralph tries to take control, but Jack leads the others in a tribal frenzy. When Simon emerges, they kill him in a kind of manic trance, imagining that he is the Beast. Simon's body floats away to sea. |
| Chapter 10 | Piggy and Ralph reflect on Simon's death, but Jack now leads the others through violence. Jack's gang steal Piggy's glasses in order to have total control. |
| Chapter 11 | Jack and Ralph fight and Piggy tries to use the conch to make them see reason. Roger levers a huge rock onto Piggy, smashing the conch and causing Piggy to fall to his death. Jack hurls a spear at Ralph, who flees for his life. |
| Chapter 12 | Now alone, Ralph is hunted to the death by Jack and his gang. A naval officer arrives, Ralph is spared and the boys are rescued. |

Character

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| Ralph | Ralph is the oldest boy and has a natural authority. As elected leader, he promotes order and the rules of civilised society. His leadership is gradually undermined by Jack, culminating in his total loss of authority. |
| Jack | Jack leads the choir and the hunters. He prioritises hunting and becomes more savage as the novel progresses. He wins the boys over through their more primal instincts, leading to his takeover of power. |
| Piggy | Piggy is physically weaker than the others. Piggy provides intelligence to Ralph's leadership. He is killed by Roger. |
| Simon | Simon spends time alone and shows insight and understanding beyond his years. He knows the true nature of the beast and shows courage in pursuing the truth. |
| Roger | Jack's main support. He enjoys cruelty and this escalates throughout the novel. |
| Sam and Eric | Twins who are loyal to Ralph, until the end. They are interchangeable to the others and referred to as 'Samaneric'. |
| Other minor characters | Maurice: Supports Jack; Robert: Hurt when he plays the pig in a tribal dance; Percival: a nervous littlun; Henry: picked on by Roger; Naval Officer: arrives in rescue at the end. |

Context

William Golding was inspired by 'The Coral Island' by RM Ballantyne. The two books share character names and a plot of shipwrecked boys. As a teacher, Golding wanted to present a more realistic portrayal of what would happen if boys were put in that situation.

The book is partially an allegory, meaning there is a deeper meaning behind the surface story. For example, the boys can be seen to represent different aspects of humanity and the conch is symbolic of democracy.

Although, not explicitly specified when and where the novel is set, Golding had experienced the events of WW2 during his time in the Royal Navy.

Britain and Germany fought for power in WW2 and Ralph and Jack are symbolic of these countries as they fight for control on the island.

At some points in the novel, Jack resembles Hitler as he manipulates the boys with his power.

Themes

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| Civilisation | Order | Society |
| Innocence | Fear | Rules |
| Power | Identity | Belief |
| Violence | Politics | Human Nature |

Structure and Form

The novel has the form of an adventure story. It is linear, with twelve chapters, (each with an exciting chapter heading).

An example of dystopian fiction, Golding uses symbolism and allegory to portray the island as a microcosm of society and the real world.

The author builds fear and tension through foreshadowing and the gradual descent from order into chaos.

There is a shift in perspective at the end, when we suddenly see the boys described through adult eyes.

Vocabulary

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| Natural imagery | Third Person | Allegory | Irony | Microcosm |
| Dystopian fiction | Metaphor | Tension | Symbolism | Perspective |
| Pathetic Fallacy | Simile | Atmosphere | Setting | Foreshadowing |
| Narrative | Dialogue | | | |

Tips

- Support points with reference to characters and events and refer back to the question set.
- Remember to show awareness of social, historical and cultural context for the essay question.

Assessment Objectives

- AO1** Respond to texts critically and imaginatively; select and evaluate relevant textual detail to illustrate and support interpretations.
- AO2** Explain how language, structure and form contribute to writers' presentation of ideas, themes and settings.
- AO4** Relate texts to their social, historical and cultural contexts; explain how texts have been influential and significant to self, and other readers in different contexts and at different times.

You are advised to spend about 40 minutes on this question.

How does William Golding present the relationship between Ralph and Jack in Lord of the Flies? Remember to support your answer with reference to the novel and to comment on its social, cultural and historical context. [20]

Ralph is the protagonist of the novel and Jack is the antagonist. Golding shows that it's an allegorical novel and the island is a microcosm of society. Golding's intentions were to show that evil is within everyone, however, it takes something to trigger barbaric behaviour. Golding was a part of the Cold War and witnessed the German battleship sink in defeat. Golding believed in 'mankind's essential illness', emphasising that everyone has evil traits within them. The novel is based on an island full of boys, where society gradually breaks down and the boys descend into savagery.

Throughout the novel, Ralph and Jack's changing relationship is central to the whole story. When Ralph uses Piggy's ideas of blowing the conch, Jack and his choir boys turn up. He runs the choir with a militaristic precision and boast that he was 'head boy' at his school. Ralph as the oldest boy has a natural air of authority and is the obvious choice as 'Chief'. This angers Jack, who questions the need for democracy, saying 'who needs a vote?'. However, Ralph's election frustrates Jack's ambitions. We see their relationship as in opposition right at the start and Golding uses the boys to set up the allegory of democracy versus dictatorship.

Early in the novel we see Jack and Ralph working together. The boys 'grinned' at each other and proves the potential for friendship between the two. The 'strange invisible light of friendship' is mentioned, showing that there is an unspoken mutual respect and admiration between them. Also, when they work together, we see that they can achieve more and Golding uses words that show unity, 'the two of us'; 'together'; 'joined in effort. This makes the eventual breakdown even more tragic as together, they have a lot of potential. We see them joined by their flaws, neither of them knows how to light the fire and eventually, it is Piggy's intelligence and use of the glasses that gets them out of that situation. Similarly, later, they are both terrified by the dead parachutist and it is Simon who shows more bravery and insight than either of them. Both Ralph and Jack could learn from Piggy and Simon but they are both guilty of not paying them enough attention.

Despite their similarities, as the novel progresses, their relationship breaks down. Ralph (representative of order) supports the idea of building 'shelters' and protecting everyone by working together, whereas Jack prioritises hunting and a survival of the fittest idea. Ralph yearns for home and says 'we are not savages, we are English', whereas Jack paints his face and becomes more and more blood-thirsty and sadistic, chanting 'kill the pig, cut its throat'. Even Ralph is not immune to this, and joins in with the tribal dance, hurting Robert. At the end of the novel, their relationship is used by Golding to show the complete breakdown of civilisation and order on the island as Jack hunts Ralph to the death like a wild animal, 'we'll smoke him out'.

Through their relationship, Golding shows that evil is within everyone given the right circumstances and how dictators can win over populations through a mixture of fear and bribery.

Commentary

The candidate has a clear focus on the question and addresses the different stages of the boys' relationship. There is thorough knowledge of the text, with well chosen plot references and quotes. Apt inclusion of contextual references. Overall this response shows sustained and detailed knowledge.

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes on this question.

What thoughts and feelings do you have as you read this extract? Give reasons for what you say, and remember to support your answer with words and phrases from the extract. [10]

'I know I can't see very much,' said Piggy, 'but have we got any smoke?'

Ralph moved impatiently, still watching the ship.

'The smoke on the mountain.'

Maurice came running, and stared out to sea. Both Simon and Piggy were looking up at the mountain. Piggy screwed up his face but Simon cried out as though he had hurt himself.

'Ralph! Ralph!'

The quality of his speech slewed Ralph on the sand.

'You tell me,' said Piggy anxiously. 'Is there a signal?'

Ralph looked back at the dispersing smoke on the horizon, then up at the mountain. 'Ralph – please! Is there a signal?'

Simon put out his hand, timidly, to touch Ralph; but Ralph started to run, splashing through the shallow end of the bathing-pool, across the hot, white sand and under the palms. A moment later, he was battling with the complex under-growth that was already engulfing the scar. Simon ran after him, then Maurice. Piggy shouted.

'Ralph! Please – Ralph!'

Then he too started to run, stumbling over Maurice's discarded shorts before he was across the terrace. Behind the four boys, the smoke moved gently along the horizon; and on the beach, Henry and Johnny were throwing sand at Percival who was crying quietly again; and all three were in complete ignorance of the excitement.

By the time Ralph had reached the landward end of the scar he was using precious breath to swear. He did desperate violence to his naked body among the rasping creepers so that blood was sliding over him. Just where the steep ascent of the mountain began, he stopped. Maurice was only a few yards behind him.

'Piggy's specs!' shouted Ralph, 'if the fire's right out, we'll need them –'

He stopped shouting and swayed on his feet. Piggy was only just visible, stumbling up from the beach. Ralph looked at the horizon, then up to the mountain. Was it better to fetch Piggy's glasses, or would the ship have gone? Or if they climbed on, supposing the fire was right out, and they had to watch Piggy crawling nearer and the ship sinking under the horizon? Balanced on a high peak of need, agonized by indecision, Ralph cried out:

'Oh God, oh God!'

Simon, struggling with bushes, caught his breath. His face was twisted. Ralph blundered on, savaging himself, as the wisp of smoke moved on.

The fire was dead. They saw that straight away; saw what they had really known down on the beach when the smoke of home had beckoned. The fire was right out, smokeless and dead: the watchers were gone. A pile of unused fuel lay ready.

The extract begins with the symbolic image of Piggy's specs. Piggy states 'I know I can't see very much' and this suggests that logical and intellectual knowledge are beginning to disappear. However, Ralph is 'still watching the ship' emphasising that hope of rescue as the 'ship' is the only image of civilisation on the island to still fully exist.

'The smoke on the mountain' is used because Ralph's focus is on the rescue and thought that the mountain would be the best place for the fire. Golding builds suspense here as the boys are unsure if the fire is still going, hoping that there is a 'signal'.

Ralph is one of the few characters left to cling to the hope of civilisation and he 'started to run, splashing through the shallow end of the bathing pool'. Verbs like 'run' and 'splashing' convey his eagerness. Golding builds suspense here as Ralph is running in hope for the smoke still to be signalling the ship. However, all hope is lost as 'the fire was dead' suggesting that the descent into savagery is slowly creeping in.

I feel as though Golding repeats the word 'dead' to symbolise that the dangerous 'fire' foreshadows the choirboys' behaviour, especially as they become hunters. Golding highlights that 'the fire was right out, smokeless and dead', implying that Ralph's focus on rescue isn't priority to the others as 'the watchers were gone'. This shows that everyone is doing their own thing, further emphasising that Ralph's power is no longer important to the others as someone left the only hope of rescue burn out.

However, we do see that the boys use their outer knowledge to use the resources they have in the hope of civilisation. Piggy's glasses are a symbolic image as they represent logic and reason.

Commentary

The response is clear, methodical and focused. The candidate selects and highlights relevant examples and phrases in support of points.