Lord of the Flies

by: William Golding
Chapter One - The Sound of the Shell

Vocabulary
altered – changed
apprehension – suspicion; fear
askew – out of line
bastion – projecting part of a fortification
clambering – awkwardly climbing
decorous – proper
efflorescence – blossoming
effulgence – brilliance
emitted – gave off
enmity – ill will
fledged – covered
foliage – leaves and brush
furtive – stealthy
gorging – greedily eating
hiatus – gap
incredulous – skeptical
interposed – set between

irrelevance – utter unimportance
lodgments – lodgings
loitered – lingered
lolling – lunged
motif – recurring element
multitude – great number
pallidly – dully
pallor – paleness
pliant – flexible
prominent – at the forefront
ranged – set in a row
specious – deceptive in appearance
speculated – wondered
strident – loud; harsh
surmounted – topped
swathing – enveloping

1. What is the fair boy’s attitude when he realizes that there may be no grown-ups on the island?

*He is happy. “The fair boy said this [that there are no grown-ups here] solemnly; but then the delight of a realized ambition overcame him.”* (Pg. 8)

2. How did the boys come to be on this island?

*They were on a plane that was attacked and shot down. They apparently crash-landed on the beach in the passenger tube.*

3. Ralph, the fair boy, seems to delight in being on the island and he swims and plays in the lagoon. What seems to be the concern of the other boy?

*He wants to make a list of the other survivors and have a meeting. In short, he wants not to play but to get things organized.*
4. Why does Ralph’s talk of rescue sound naive or innocent?

*He thinks his father will rescue him.*

5. Describe the other boy, Piggy.

*He is fat, wears glasses, has asthma, and seems to be a mama’s (auntie’s) boy. He also seems a bit brighter and a little more mature than Ralph.*

6. What do they spot in the sand, and what is the first reaction of the boys?

*They see a conch shell. Ralph seems intrigued by its design and color, but Piggy sees it as something to be blown into. He thinks it may be used to call the other boys together.*

7. In what sense do Ralph and Piggy make one whole boy while dealing with the coach?

*Piggy had the idea and knows how to blow it, but only Ralph has the physical strength to do the job.*

8. Who are the boys that appear out of the jungle and what do they do?

*They are English boys who have been attending private schools. In age, they are between 6 and 12. As they walk to the point where Ralph is blowing the shell, they sit down and wait for instructions. “The children gave him the same simple obedience that they had given to the men with megaphones.” (Pg. 18) The men were, obviously, the authority that organized the boys’ departure.*

9. Who is Merridew and what is our first impression of him?

*He is the choir leader, and we can see from the way he marches the choir that he is inclined toward military discipline and thinking.*

10. When Merridew finds out that there are no adults on the island, why does he reject the name Jack?

*“Kids’ names,” said Merridew. “Why should I be Jack? I’m Merridew.”*

11. How can we see that Jack is used to commanding?

*He refuses to allow his choir to rest or to remove their uniforms. He shows no sympathy for a fainted Simon. In addition to keeping the choir in order, he turns to Piggy and says, “You’re talking too much...Shut up, Fatty.” ((Pg. 21) His face is “ugly without silliness,” an indication of his malevolent character. ((Pg. 20)*
12. How do we know that Piggy’s place in this island society is going to be similar to his status in England? What do you suppose his situation was there?

Because of his weight and physical handicaps, Piggy seems to have been something of an outsider, the butt of other boys’ jokes. It looks as if, because of the way the others laugh at him, that things will be no different for him here. He seems to want to be accepted, but is too intellectual, weak, and overweight.

13. Although Piggy seemed to be the smartest and Jack is an obvious leader, why is Ralph elected chief?

Most of all, he was the one who had blown the conch. To the others, this counted for a good bit. Other reasons are probably the intangible ones used for choosing a leader.

14. In what two ways had Ralph disappointed Piggy?

First, Ralph told everybody the hated name of “Piggy,” and then he would not let Piggy come with the three boys when they went to explore the island.

15. What did the boys determine at the top of the mountain? How do they seem to feel about this?

They were definitely on an island, and it appeared uninhabited. They seem elated. Ralph says, “This [the island] belongs to us.” (Pg. 29) Rather than being depressed by it, they seem excited to be on their own without adults present.

16. What is the first act of willful destruction? What is their reaction?

The boys roll a huge boulder down the hillside. They are ecstatic and triumphant despite, or possibly because of, the harm the boulder did to their new home.

17. Jack wants his choir to be the hunters, but he fails to kill the piglet. Why?

He has never killed anything before and the enormity of the blood-spilling and killing holds him back. Jack is still an innocent.

18. What implied vow does he make?

At the next opportunity he will not fail. He will slam the killing knife into the animal without any thoughts of mercy.

19. At this point, what is the relationship between Ralph and Jack?

They seem to be equals, and they seem to have become friends.
20. The island is described as being “roughly boat shaped.” (Pg. 29) What does this image bring to mind regarding the boys?

_They all are, so to speak, in the same boat together and on a journey of some kind; to where, they do not know._

Chapter Two - Fire on the Mountain

**Vocabulary**
assented – consented
borne – held aloft
confirmation – agreement
ebullience – enthusiasm; liveliness
errant – aimless
festooned – decorated
fluently – easily; fluidly
gesticulated – gestured
induced – persuaded
martyred – self-sacrificing
officious – meddlesome
quota – proportional part
recrimination – accusation in response to another accusation
tumult – commotion

1. What function has the clearing by the lagoon, described as a platform, seem to have assumed?

_It seems to have become the official place for holding meetings._

2. How does the conch become the visible symbol of authority?

_The boy holding the conch has the floor, and he is the only one allowed to speak._

3. What are Jack’s feelings about rules?

_There should be many of them, and anyone who breaks them should be physically punished. Jack is exhibiting the beginnings of his cruelty._
4. With its benign climate, fresh water and abundant fruit, this place could seem to be a Garden of Eden until the little boy comes forward. What element does he introduce? How does he describe it? How does the descriptive phrase, “the small boy twisted further into himself” hint at a theme? (Pg. 35)

The six-year-old hints at the presence on the island of a “beastie.” If this were the Garden of Eden, it could be said that the boy introduces a consideration of evil. He describes a “snake-thing,” which again reminds one of the Garden of Eden. The boy “twists” into himself, like a snake, subtly indicating, for the first time, Golding’s belief that the beast is within all of us.

5. What does Piggy reluctantly contribute to the fire?

The boys take his glasses to get the fire started.

6. In what ways is Piggy the voice of reason?

He chastises the group for acting like “a crowd of kids.” (Pg. 44) He wants them to think and plan rather than doing things poorly. He points out that they are burning up what was to be the firewood for the distress signal. In addition, the fire that is out of control may burn up all their fruit and meat and ruin any firewood. The meeting seems to be disintegrating and Piggy, conch in hand, demands to be heard.

7. On what ominous note does this chapter end?

One of the little ones, the one who brought up the beastie, is missing and, presumably, was killed in the fire.
Chapter Three - Huts on the Beach

Vocabulary
abyss – nothingness; void
antagonism – opposition
avidly – eagerly; greedily
clarity – clear understanding
compulsion – deep impulse
contrite – apologetic
foundered – collapsed
gaudy – showy; colorful
inscrutable – not easily interpreted
susurration – murmur
tacit – unspoken but understood
unheeding – ignoring
vicissitudes – changing circumstances

1. Why is Ralph getting frustrated?

Very little progress is being made on completing the shelters, which bothers him greatly. His own hut has fallen, only two others have been completed, and these two are shaky.

2. In addition to being a shelter from the weather, in what symbolic way does Ralph think that the shelters are important?

He feels the others, particularly the younger kids, would feel more secure from the beastie, whatever that is, if they were sleeping in shelters. A shelter would be sort of a home. It might prevent nightmares but it would, at minimum, give the boys a sense of purpose.

3. When Jack is hunting or talking about hunting, what kind of look does he have? What does this seem to signify?

A mad look comes into his eyes. He seems to be becoming obsessed with hunting and killing a pig. He is much more savage than the others, nearly naked, studying pig signs, carrying a spear. He states on page 53 “Rescue? Yes, of course! All the same, I’d like to catch a pig first—” It is clear that Jack’s desire for bloodletting is extremely strong.

4. What is causing friction between Ralph and Jack?

Jack feels that he is doing something important in hunting, but Ralph feels that it shows little gain and that he, Simon, and the rest are stuck with the work of building shelters. Some of the problem may simply be the desire for power and control.
5. What conclusion does Jack reach about the pig and what plan does he formulate? What confusion do Jack and Ralph have?

_In the heat of the day, the pigs must go to the top of the mountain and sleep in the shade. Jack wants to paint his face and sneak up on them while they are sleeping. Jack becomes excited about the pig hunt, while Ralph believes the excitement is about a ship. Jack feels that meat is more important than rescue. Ralph knows better._

6. How does the narrator describe the relationship between Jack and Ralph?

_“They looked at each other, baffled, in love and hate.” (Pg. 55)_

7. Of Simon, Ralph says: “He’s queer. He’s funny.” (Pg. 55) In what way is Simon different from the others?

_He seems to be more of a loner, and more sensitive than the others. We find out later that he is an epileptic. Simon is also more observant and introspective. At the end of the chapter, Simon is alone within the concealment of the jungle, and, furtively, with Golding supplying nature imagery, Simon spends the night. He communicates/understands/learns there; the richness and symbolism of nature seem ineffable and sensual. Later in the book, Jack accuses Simon of using the jungle as a lavatory: “He was taken short.” (Pg. 85) The reader is unsure of what actually occurs._

8. What literary term is used in this quotation: “They walked along, two continents of experience and feeling…”? (Pg. 55)

_Hyperbole is the term used. The word “continents” is obviously exaggerated, but it does express the vast difference between the two leaders._
**Chapter Four - Painted Faces and Long Hair**

**Vocabulary**
- appalled – shocked; weakened
- belligerence – aggression
- blatant – obvious; glaring
- chastisement – scolding
- compelled – driven; forced
- detritus – debris
- dispersing – breaking up; drifting in different directions
- dubious – doubtful
- gouts – gushes
- impalpable – unable to be touched
- incursion – raid
- inevitably – predictably; unavoidably
- malevolently – spitefully
- myriad – uncountable number
- obscurely – vaguely
- omission – condition of being left out
- opalescence – iridescence
- preposterous – contrary to reason
- ravenously – desperately hungrily

1. Why do Roger and Maurice kick over the sand castles of the younger children?

_They simply act out of meanness. They do, however, destroy both a bit of happiness and a reminder of the boys’ previous existence. Roger “led the way,” indicating his growing sadism. (Pg. 60)_

2. Why does some sort of excuse come to Maurice’s mind?

_In his old life when he did things like this, he had to have some excuse to tell the adults. His guilt feelings are behavioral responses conditioned by society._

3. What is symbolized by the distinction in Golding’s coined words “biguns” and “littluns”?

_In the simplest terms, the boys are now speaking sloppily, losing a bit more of their individuality and civilization. Sam and Eric conveniently become one, their individuality blotted out by combining their names into “Samneric.” Golding has created a dualistic society, each side unconcerned with the actions and well-being of the other. The stage is being set for the upcoming violence._
4. What literary terms are used in the following quotations: “The sun gazed down like an angry eye”? (Pg. 58)

*Personification, giving the sun the ability to see, and simile, comparing it to an eye with the word “like” are the two terms.*

5. Why, according to the narrator, does Roger not throw the rocks to hit Henry? What comment is made about civilization? How is it foreshadowing?

_Apparently he would like to, but he is prevented from doing so by the “invisible yet strong taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law.” Civilization not only does not acknowledge Roger anymore, but also “was in ruins;” this foreshadowing points to the future disintegration of the island civilization. (Pg. 62)_

6. In what sense does putting on the mask free Jack? Why might this liberation bode ill for the others?

_*The mask...behind which Jack hid, liberated [him] from shame and self-consciousness._” (Pg. 64) Since it is because of shame, fear of retribution, and self-consciousness that we do not treat others badly, a loss of these qualities means that Jack may treat others harshly when he is concealed. The disguise is one of savagery and a primitive existence. It doubly removes him, not only from his acts, but also from the constraints of civilization.

7. What creates the barrier between Jack and Ralph?

_Because Jack left the fire watch to go hunting, the signal fire went out. The ship on the horizon might have rescued them if the fire had been tended._

8. What bloodthirsty chant has become part of their hunting ritual?

_*Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood._” (Pg. 69)

9. What two worlds does the narrator say that Jack and Ralph depict?

*Jack represents “the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill;” Ralph represents “the world of longing and baffled commonsense.” (Pg. 71)*
Chapter Five - Beast from Water

Vocabulary
rendered – made
lamentably – woefully
ludicrous – ridiculous
derisive – scornful
effigy – likeness
sough – moaning; sighing
perilous – dangerous
decorum – proper behavior
discursive – rambling
incantation – chanting

1. How has Ralph changed?
   He no longer sees his job as a leader as a sport or fun. He sees it as a serious responsibility, and it seems to tire him out at this point. He longs for civilization more than anyone but Piggy.

2. In this assembly, Ralph acts like the leader he is, but what does he feel that he lacks?
   He realizes that Piggy is a better thinker than he is.

3. How does Jack deal with the fear?
   Jack, while he denies the existence of a beast, implies that if there were one, he, as a hunter, would kill it.

4. What does Piggy represent in his speech at the assembly?
   Piggy, now half blind, stands for rules, intelligence, science, and order, which are in tatters.

5. The second littlun has lost his connection to the previous world. What does this precipitate?
   The rest of the littluns begin to cry with Percival. Then he reveals that “the beast comes out of the sea.” (Pg. 88) This is a moment that will haunt the boys. The sea itself surrounds them, is mysterious, prevents their rescue, and holds too much unknown for them to deal with intelligently. If a terror comes from the water, it must be powerful.
6. What theme does Simon express at the meeting? What is the reaction?

Simon, struggling to find the words, states that the beast is real. Ralph is astonished, but Simon then comes to the conclusion that “maybe it’s only us.” (Pg. 89)


Ralph knows that “the rules are the only thing we’ve got”’ (Pg. 91)

8. What does Ralph mean by that comment and why is it significant?

The rules “are the only thing we’ve got” to keep the island society together as a unit. Without the rules there seems to be only anarchy as the behavior of the boys at the assembly seems to reveal.

9. What is Ralph’s dilemma?

If he tries to establish order by blowing the symbol of authority, the conch, and no one responds, they are doomed; if he does not blow the conch, they are doomed anyway.

10. Why does Piggy desperately want Ralph to stay on as chief?

He fears what Jack would do to him if Ralph stepped down as chief.

11. Find an example of irony dealing with adults on page 94.

One of the three boys, Ralph, Piggy, or Simon, says, “they wouldn’t quarrel” This statement is a perfect example of “dramatic irony.” The adults on the planet are engaged in a nuclear war; the children are merely, at this point, arguing among themselves.

12. In what sense are Ralph, Piggy and Simon in conflict with the rest of the boys?

They are voices of reason trying to re-establish a society that will result in their working together to be saved. The rest of the boys cannot seem to get this picture.
Chapter Six - Beast from Air

Vocabulary
chasms – marked divisions, separations, or differences
emphatic – forceful; emphasized
guano – seabird droppings
interminable – endless
leviathan – giant creature
mutinously – rebelliously
plinth – square rock serving as a base
tremulously – tremblingly

1. What is the beast from the air?

A dead pilot has landed on the island, and his parachute harness is flapping in the wind at the top of the mountain. Samneric, on fire duty, exaggeratedly report the new beast to the rest of the boys.

2. What has Ralph fixed his mind on, that the others seem to think of very little? Why do they not seem to share his concern?

The signal fire, smoke, and rescue obsess Ralph. Ralph appears to feel the burden of leadership and seems now more mature than most of the other boys.

3. Why is exploring the castle-like rock formation a scary proposition, and who does it? What is Simon’s function here?

They suspect that if the beast has a home on the island, this must be the spot. Jack has previously defied Ralph on the issue of only talking if one holds the conch, hit Piggy with a “violent swing,” and claimed killing the beast “is a hunter’s job.” (Pg. 102) Ralph, happy to be relieved of the responsibilities of chief, allows Jack to lead the hunt. Simon reasons out the inconsistencies of the beast: it leaves no tracks, is slow, and must be inherent in the nature of man, rather than being an external beast.

4. Why does Ralph go first?

He claims, after Jack blushes in fear, that “I’m chief. I’ll go.” (Pg. 104)

5. Ralph insists they check the mountaintop for the beast and relight the fire. What is it that the other boys want to do?

The others want to play in the castle or go back to the camp.

6. Everyone wants to be rescued, so why do the other boys not work harder at it?

They are kids and they act like kids. Immediate gratification has a higher priority than working toward a goal. Play is more fun than work. The basic reason, though, is that they are fearful of what they might find just around the curve.