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Characters in Lord of the Flies

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## Characters in Lord of the Flies

### 1- Ralph

Ralph, a twelve-year-old boy marooned with a group of other boys on a deserted island, is the athletic, charismatic protagonist of *Lord of the Flies*. Elected the leader of the boys at the beginning of the novel, Ralph is the primary representative of order, civilization, and productive leadership in the novel. While most of the other boys are concerned with playing, having fun, and avoiding work at the beginning of the novel, Ralph sets about building huts and thinking of ways to maximize their chances of being rescued. For this reason, Ralph's power and influence over the other boys are extremely secure at the beginning of the novel. However, as the book progresses and the group succumbs to savage instincts, Ralph's position declines precipitously as Jack's station rises. Eventually, all the boys except Piggy leave Ralph's group for Jack's, and Ralph is left alone to be hunted by Jack's tribe. Ralph never seriously considers joining Jack's tribe to save himself.

Ralph's commitment to civilization and morality is very strong, and his main wish is to be rescued and returned to the society of adults. In a sense, this strength gives Ralph a moral victory at the end of the novel, when he casts the *Lord of the Flies* to the ground and takes up the stake it is impaled on to defend himself against Jack's hunters. Ralph understands, as Simon did, that savagery exists within all the boys, but he is determined not to let it overwhelm him.

For much of the novel, Ralph is simply unable to understand why the other boys would give in to the base instincts of bloodlust and barbarism. The sight of the hunters chanting and dancing is baffling and distasteful to him. But when Ralph hunts a boar for the first time, he experiences the exhilaration and thrill of bloodlust and violence, and when he attends Jack's feast, he is swept away by the frenzy, dancing on the edge of the group and participating in the killing of Simon. This firsthand knowledge of the evil that exists within him, as within all human beings, is tragic for Ralph, and it plunges him into listless despair for several chapters. But

this knowledge also enables him to cast down the Lord of the Flies at the end of the novel. Ralph's story ends semi-tragically; although he is rescued and returned to civilization when he sees the naval officer, he weeps with the burden of his knowledge about humanity.

## 2- JACK

Jack, the strong-willed, egomaniacal boy who is the novel's prime representative of the instinct of savagery, violence, and power, is the antithesis of Ralph. From the beginning of the novel, Jack desires power above all other things; he is furious when he loses the election to Ralph and continually pushes the boundaries of his subordinate role in the group.

Early on, Jack retains the sense of moral propriety and behavior that was instilled in him by society—he was the leader of the choirboys, after all. The first time he encounters a pig, he is unable to kill it. But Jack soon becomes obsessed with hunting and devotes himself to the task, painting his face like a barbarian and giving himself over to bloodlust. The more savage Jack becomes, the more he can control the rest of the group, which, apart from Ralph, Simon, and Piggy, largely follows him in casting off moral restraint and embracing violence and savagery. By the end of the novel, Jack has learned to use the boys' fear of the beast to control their behavior, giving Golding a chance to explore how religion and superstition can be used as instruments of power. Jack's love of authority and violence are intimately connected, as each enables him to feel powerful and exalted.

## 3- SIMON

If Ralph stands at one end of a line, representing civilization, and Jack stands at the other end of the line, representing savagery, where does Simon stand? The answer is that, unlike all the other boys, Simon is not on the line at all; he stands on a different plane from every other character in the novel. Simon seems to represent a kind of innate, spiritual human goodness that is deeply connected with nature and, in its way, as primal as Jack's evilness. The other characters in the novel abandon moral behavior as soon as civilization no longer imposes it upon

them; they are not innately moral but have simply been conditioned to act morally by the adult world, by the threat of punishment for misdeeds. To an extent, even the civility of Ralph and Piggy is a product of social conditioning, as can be seen in their participation in the hunt dance.

In the psychology of the novel, the civilizing impulse is not as deeply rooted in the human psyche as the savage impulse. Alone of all the children on the island, Simon acts morally not out of some guilt or shame but because he believes in its inherent value. He behaves kindly toward the younger children, and he is the first to realize the problem posed by the beast and the Lord of the Flies—that is, that the monster on the island is not some physical beast, but rather a savagery that lurks within each human being. This idea finds representation in the sow's head and eventually stands as the moral conclusion of the novel. The main problem of the book is the idea of inherent human evil. Against this, Simon seems to represent an idea of essential human goodness. Yet his brutal murder by the other boys indicates the scarcity of that goodness amid an overwhelming abundance of evil

#### 4- Piggy

Piggy is short, overweight, and asthmatic. He wears glasses, he rejects physical labor, and he whines consistently. Most of the other boys use him as a scapegoat, and they mock and ostracize him. His true name is never given in the story; the boys call him Piggy, which he asks not to be called.

Piggy is a strong supporter of Ralph, and he acts as an advisor. Piggy is intellectual, scientific, and good with words, and Ralph leans on him, though he does often get frustrated with Piggy's whiney personality. Although he does not help with the hard work, Piggy contributes to the group in several ways, including letting them use his glasses to start a fire, having the idea for a sundial, and acting as a scientific voice of reason. Piggy becomes the victim of violent Roger near the end of the novel. Piggy, Ralph, and Samneric go to Jack's camp to get Piggy's glasses back, and Roger sends a boulder falling on him, which hits Piggy and sends him flying off the cliff. His character represents intellect and science.

## Pastor Simon in Lord of the Flies

Simon is an allegory for Christ in Lord of the Flies. He often sacrifices for the good of the tribe. He helps the tribe by Exploring the island to get their bearings Building the shelters alongside Ralph Reaching down fruit for the little Climbing the mountain to find the truth about the beast Simon is skinny and small, with dark hair and bright eyes. He is an outcast, and shy, and he enjoys solitude. He finds a glade in the forest that no one else knows about, and he spends his free time meditating in his hideout. He has a medical condition that makes him faint. During one of his episodes, he hallucinates a severed pig head is talking to him. Simon is killed in when he goes into Jack's camp, where they are having a tribal ritual, to tell the others that he found a dead man on the mountain, and that there is no Beast