

3. Themes

Fear

- Ralph is afraid for his life. He has real, physical reasons to be afraid.

Good and evil

- The evil of Jack and the tribe seems to have no limits as they hunt Ralph down. It comes to an end when they meet an adult and remember society's laws, which they have broken and forgotten.

Civilisation and savagery

- Faced with the reality of the adult world the "savages" return to being "little boys".
- Even Jack is afraid of punishment for breaking the laws of adult society and does not say that he was the leader.

- But again, what is the "civilisation" the boys will return to? The adult war is being fought with weapons far greater than the boys' sharpened sticks, and with far more "savage" results – nuclear war.

Power

- The boys will lose all their power in the adult world, and the adults who hold the power are using it to wage a nuclear war that could put an end to all life.



Innocence

- All the boys have lost the innocence that at first had made the island seem like a paradise to them.
- When Ralph weeps "for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy", he has realised the evil that lies in the hearts of many people, even himself.

Leadership

- Ralph says that he was a leader on the island.
- Jack does not say he was a leader on the island. Jack will not take responsibility for the evil that he has caused, he acts like a coward, not a true leader.

4. Symbols

The conch

- Since the conch was destroyed, order and democracy have disappeared from the island.

- Ralph misses the "dignity" and order the conch represented.

Fire

- Fire here is both destructive and the means of the boys' rescue.

The beast

- Ralph, who did not believe in the presence of a physical beast, now knows that the real beast is the "darkness of man's heart".

5. Diction and figurative language

The writer uses irony to help us to understand the resolution of the novel. For example:

Irony

The **resolution** (conclusion) of the novel, is filled with irony. Some examples are:

- **The fire:** It is ironic that in their attempt to destroy Ralph the members of the tribe set fire to the island. Firstly, they are destroying their food supply; secondly, Jack had mocked the idea of the rescue fire, yet it is his fire that brings them rescue.
- **Rescue:** Being rescued was Ralph and Piggy's main aim but, when rescue comes, the boys will be going back to a world torn apart by a nuclear war. Ralph's home, which he misses so much, quite possibly no longer exists.
- **The officer:** He compares the boys' situation to that described in *Coral Island*, a fantasy (imagined story) that is the opposite of the reality of this island.

