

3. Themes

Good and evil; civilisation and savagery

- With the death of Piggy, the capture of Samneric and the attack on Ralph, goodness and civilisation seem to have lost the battle against evil and savagery; Jack and his savages have won this battle.

Power

- By the end of the chapter Ralph has been robbed of all power and Jack, helped by Roger, has total power over everyone. Jack makes his own laws to suit himself and anyone who does not obey him is punished or destroyed.

Fear

- Jack has become the beast to be feared, proving that what Simon said about the beast being the evil inside human beings was true.

4. Symbols

The conch

- A symbol of democracy and lawful authority, the conch is described as "fragile" and "delicate", showing how easily civilisation can be destroyed. It is smashed to pieces when Piggy falls, symbolising the final destruction of democracy and proper law and order on the island.

Piggy's glasses

- The glasses are the source of fire and the symbol of insight and intelligence, and they are the cause of the final confrontation between Jack and Ralph. When Jack has them they become nothing more than a tool to light a cooking fire.

Fire

- The only fire left on the island is for cooking; the tribe has no interest in rescue.



4. Diction and figurative language

The writer uses less figurative language in this chapter as it mostly contains action and conflict. Here are examples of metaphors and dialogue:

Metaphors

- Perhaps the most striking metaphor is the one used to describe Roger: "The hangman's horror clung to him." A hangman is the person who hangs people who have been sentenced to death. The hangman is regarded with horror because of his dreadful job and his identity is often kept secret because otherwise people would avoid contact with him. After Roger has killed Piggy even Jack has some of the same feeling of horror for Roger and does not argue with him: "The Chief said no more to him ..."

Did you know?
When the novel was written people in England were still sentenced to death for certain crimes. The death penalty was not abolished in England until 1965 and in South Africa until 1995.

Dialogue

- The writer's use of dialogue indicates the nature and background of the characters. Phrases such as "playing the game" (meaning to be fair), "Oh, I say!" and "Honesty!" (see notes on Ralph and Samneric) are typical of well-behaved boys from the middle/upper class in England in the 1950s. Even on the island some of the boys are still influenced by the behaviour/manners they were taught at home.
- However, Piggy crudely (insultingly) calls the tribe "a pack of painted niggers", language which shocks us today. He is using language that he has heard racist and prejudiced adults use.