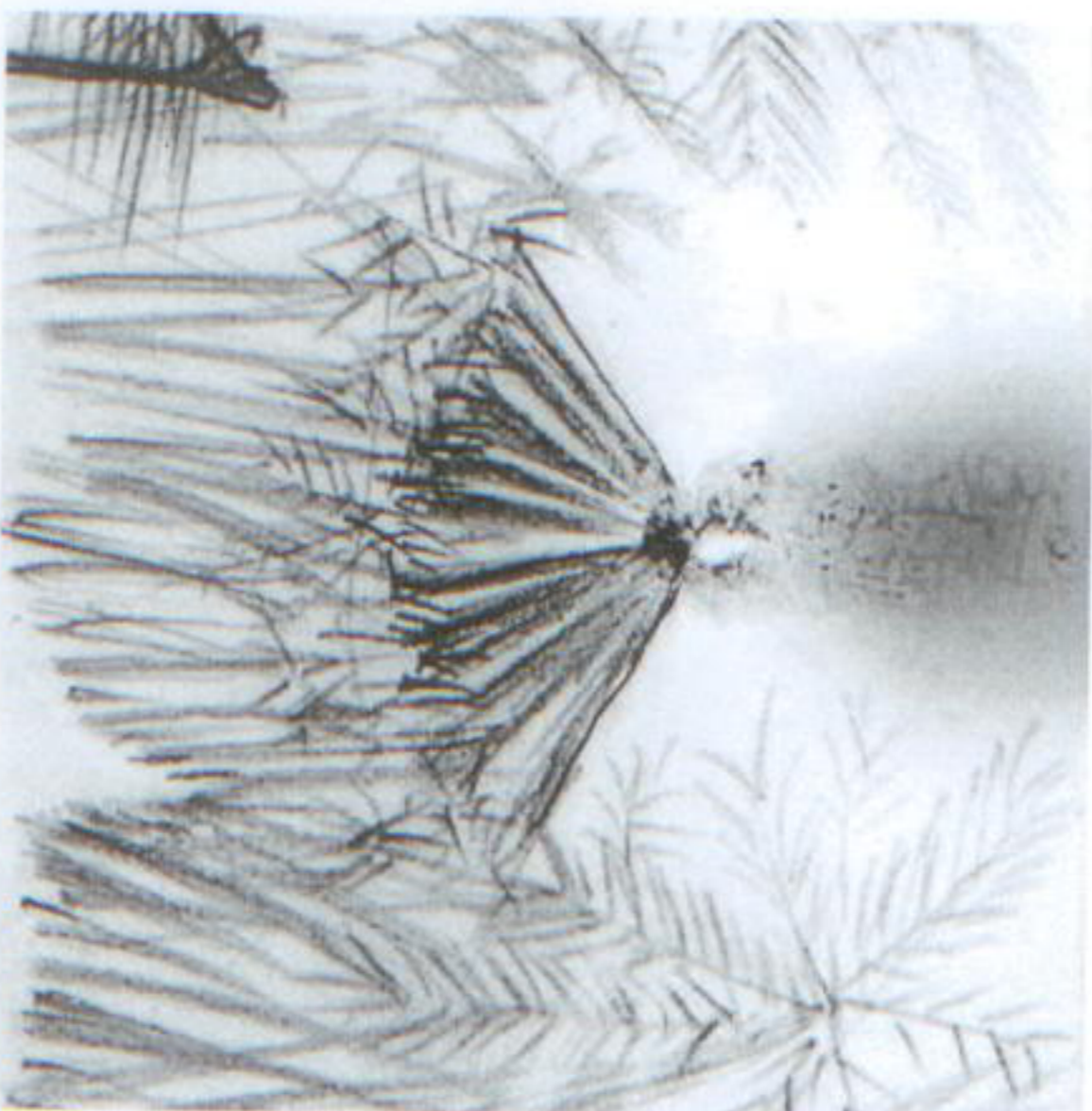


Chapter 2

Fire on the Mountain



1. What happens in the chapter?

The events in this chapter happen later during the boys' first day on the island. In Chapter two the boys still see the island as a good place with "that glamour, that strange invisible light of friendship, adventure and content", but already bad things are happening.

Ralph calls a meeting. The meeting takes place after Ralph, Jack and Simon have explored the island. Ralph tells the meeting that they are on a deserted (uninhabited) island. He makes a rule that the person who holds the conch can speak and the others must listen. Ralph creates order by explaining the rules that will apply at their meetings.

Piggy, on the other hand, is worried that no one (their parents or any other adults) knows where they are. The knowledge that they are stuck on the island makes the boys feel afraid. Ralph tries to make them feel better. He says it is a "good island", there is food and water. They will have fun on the island until the grown-ups come to fetch them. A little boy with a purple birthmark on his face says he is afraid of the "snake-thing", a "beastie" he saw during the night. Ralph also says the boys must make a fire on the mountain so that the smoke will attract a ship that will rescue them.

Immediately the boys rush off excitedly and all work together to collect wood. They light a fire using Piggy's glasses to reflect the sun on the wood but after the flames flare up "twenty feet in the air" they soon die out. Piggy is upset when no one listens to him although he has the conch and Jack tells him that the rules do not count on the mountain. Ralph disagrees and says they need more rules. Then Piggy sees that the fire has spread to the forest below and the little boy with the birthmark is missing. He is never seen again – he must have died in the fire.

2. Who is involved?

Ralph

- Ralph displays leadership qualities and is mature and responsible as he wants to keep order. For example, when everyone speaks at once he makes a rule: "We'll have to have "hands up" ... I'll give the conch to the next person to speak."
- Ralph is kind to the little one when he explains that "beasties" and snakes are found only in big countries. He can also be forceful, as we see when he shouts at Jack that there "isn't a beast" and he also tells Jack they need more rules.
- Ralph believes in decent (civilised) behaviour and makes a rule: "Where the conch is, that's a meeting."

