

Chapter 3

Huts on the Beach



1. What happens in the chapter?

Some days later Jack is obsessed with hunting the pigs, but has not yet been successful, while Ralph and Simon are trying to build shelters for the boys, which they find difficult. The other boys do not help with the shelters and Ralph is puzzled and frustrated that most of the boys have lost focus (they are not thinking about the important things).

Tension arises between Jack and Ralph because Jack thinks hunting is the priority but Ralph thinks keeping the signal fire burning and making shelters should come first. Ralph is upset because he and Simon are the only ones working - all the others are swimming and having fun. During their disagreement Jack shouts at Ralph, but both boys calm down.

Ralph says the boys are afraid and have nightmares: "As if it wasn't a good island." The littluns and the biguns are frightened when the beast is mentioned. Ralph continues to insist on the importance of the fire, while

Jack is very excited about the idea of hunting. They think and feel very differently and neither understands the other: they are "two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate."

Simon walks through the jungle. He is followed by the smaller boys, who are obviously intrigued by him. He helps the littluns by getting them fruit that is high up in the trees and out of their reach. When he is alone he wanders deep into the jungle until he finds an open but peaceful place. The plants create a little cabin in which he sits and looks out at a pair of butterflies dancing in the clearing. Later in the novel he makes this place his sanctuary (a quiet and safe place where he can get away from the others).

2. Who is involved?

Ralph

- Ralph shows he is a responsible and caring leader by trying to provide shelters for the boys. He is aware of the boys' fear and wants the shelters to give them homes.
- Ralph wants to go back to civilisation and insists on keeping the fire burning.
- Ralph shows a deeper understanding of human nature when, complaining that people do not help with the tasks, he thinks: "people were never quite what you thought they were".

Jack

- Jack is changing from the boy in Chapter 2 who could not kill the pig to a wilder, crueler person. For example:
- Jack loves hunting so much that he becomes almost like an animal, "dog-like", as he stalks his prey: "a furtive thing, ape-like ...". He even thinks it would be a good idea for him and his hunters to paint their faces so the pigs will not see them coming.
- Jack has a "compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up". While hunting provides an important source of food, Jack's desire to hunt is more vicious than it needs to be. A compulsion is an irresistible urge or impulse.
- Jack's eyes indicate the wild and dangerous streak in him: while he is hunting his eyes are "bright blue ... and nearly mad". When he tells Ralph about hunting: "The madness came into his eyes again."



In this chapter there is conflict between Ralph and Jack. This creates tension in the story as the action rises.