

Chapter 4

Painted Faces and Long Hair



1. What happens in the chapter?

More days later – the day that the ship passed by... The boys are used to life on the island, but at night many are afraid. Talk about the beast continues among the boys. They are dirty, their hair is long and most are almost naked. The littluns develop stomach ailments and diarrhoea because they eat too much fruit. Sometimes the small boys are harassed by the bigger ones, but for them life has settled down to a routine of playing, searching for fruit and food and sleeping.

Three littluns are building sand castles and Roger, followed by Maurice, destroys the castles. Maurice is a follower and copies Roger, but he leaves when Percival cries because Little Johnny kicked sand into his eyes. Maurice's upbringing still influences him – he can still feel bad when someone is hurt. Roger follows little Henry and throws stones around him, but deliberately avoids hitting him as he, too, is still influenced by what he was taught at home. Henry enjoys trapping and having power over the tiny sea creatures. All three boys show unkindness. Jack arrives and he and the big boys smear coloured clay on their faces (so that the pig will not see them) before they go hunting.

Piggy, Ralph and Simon are on the beach when Ralph sees a ship far out at sea. The boys become very excited. Ralph rushes up the mountain followed by the others. He is deeply upset because the fire has gone out and they have lost a chance to be rescued. He is also furious with Jack, whose hunters were supposed to be watching the fire.

Jack's obsession with the desire to kill a pig grows, so he continues his hunt. He and the hunters, feeling very pleased with themselves, arrive carrying a dead pig. Ralph is furious and confronts Jack about the fire going out and the others are upset when they learn that a ship passed by without seeing them. Jack hits Piggy and one lens of his glasses breaks. Jack also refuses to give Piggy

any meat, so Simon gives his meat to Piggy. Eventually Jack apologises to Ralph. The boys eat roast pig and then dance around Maurice chanting, "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. BASH her in." Ralph, who has been watching them, announces that he is calling a meeting.

NB
The chapter title, "Painted Faces and Long Hair", refers to the way Jack is forgetting his civilised upbringing and to the way his character is changing. The "long hair" suggests that the boys have been on the island for long enough for their hair to grow.

The boys have been on the island for a while and we can see the effects on them. They have not been able to create a successful life without the help of civilisation and the authority of adults.

The power struggle continues. Jack's successful hunt could make the boys feel more loyal to him than to Ralph, but the dignity of Ralph's silence about the fact that the fire has gone out makes his authority stronger.