

Piggy

- In spite of Piggy's belief in science and reason, the twins' sighting of the beast upsets him and he is worried about being left unprotected with the "littluns".
- Piggy is so tense during the power struggle between Ralph and Jack that he has an asthma attack.

Simon

- Simon's wisdom and ability to reason make him doubt there is a beast: "with claws that scratched, that sat on a mountain-top, that left no tracks and yet was not fast enough to catch Samneric".
- Simon's insight gives him a picture of the beast as "the picture of a human at once heroic and sick". In other words, the beast is a part of human nature that will show itself if it is not controlled by the laws of society. This shows us Simon as a visionary (a prophet or a person who can see a deeper truth) and a mystic (a person who gains deeper knowledge through meditation or deep thought. Think here of how Simon likes to be alone in his secret place.)
- Simon knows he is an outsider, and when Ralph smiles at him he is "happy to be accepted", although, moments later, Ralph forgets about him.

3. Themes

Fear

- Different characters react to fear in different ways. Everyone except Simon is terrified and most, including Piggy, put their own safety first. Jack uses their fear as an opportunity to seize power. Ralph controls his fear and puts his duties as leader first; he also admits to himself that "he did not really expect to meet any beast".

Power

- The power struggle between Ralph and Jack reflects the struggle between good and evil.

Goodness, order, civilisation

- Ralph stands for goodness in his concern for the safety of the littluns and for order and civilisation in his determination to keep the signal fire burning.

Disorder and savagery

- Jack stands for disorder and savagery, not only in his obsession with hunting but also in his warlike instincts. On first seeing the castle rock, he exclaims: "What a place for a fort!"

Wisdom

- Only Simon realises that the beast is the evil within human beings.

Good and evil

- Simon's vision of "a human at once heroic and sick" reveals both the good and the evil in human beings. Perhaps we could see Ralph as "heroic" and Jack as "sick", in the sense of being evil.

4. Symbols

The beast

- The boys go in search of the beast, the symbol of evil.
- Only Simon realises that the beast is inside them.
- The title of this chapter, "Beast from Air", refers to the airman who landed on the island. It also echoes the "beast of the earth" in Revelations chapter 13. This was a false prophet, just as the airman is a false beast – not a beast at all, but a broken body returning to the earth from which it came.

The conch

- The conch is a symbol of order, authority and democracy.
- The conch is ignored by Jack, who shouts: "We don't need the conch any more." This symbolises the breakdown of order and democracy in the boys' society.

The fire

- Ralph is determined to keep it alight; here it represents civilisation.

