

Gift for the Darkness

1. What happens in the chapter?

The events in this chapter take place at dawn, the next day. Ralph tells Piggy about the beast, which is in the exact place the fire had been, so they can't light a fire there. Jack is furious when Ralph calls his hunters "Boys armed with sticks". Jack takes the conch and calls a meeting at which he criticises Ralph and tries to have him voted out as leader. Jack is unsuccessful and angry, and rushes off in tears. Piggy is happy to see Jack go. Ralph feels they can do nothing to improve their situation, but Simon says all they can do is go up the mountain to see just what the beast is.

Piggy says they should light a signal fire on the beach. They discover many of the bigger boys have followed Jack. The boys feel guilty about supporting Jack openly but sneak off after him later. Jack and his followers hunt and kill a sow (female pig) with extreme cruelty. They leave the sow's head on a stake as a peace offering for the beast. Simon has slipped off to his secret place in the forest and sees the boys do this.

After this, Jack and his hunters, "Demonic figures with faces of white and red and green" burst in on Ralph's group and steal burning branches from the fire on the beach. Jack, hoping the rest will join his group, invites them to feast on roast pork. Before he leaves Maurice and Robert announce: "The chief has spoken." At the same time, in the forest, Simon is still looking at the pig's head and imagines the beast is speaking to him. It warns him not to interfere or the other boys will kill him. Simon falls unconscious (he has a fit).

The conflict between Ralph and Jack has reached a crisis point.

Jack's behaviour takes the story to a new level of horror.



2. Who is involved?

Ralph

- Ralph has lost hope of being rescued. He does not think that smoke from a fire on the beach, as Piggy suggests, will easily be seen from a ship at sea.
- Ralph is also worried that he might become like the others and not care about being rescued.
- Ralph speaks to the boys who have stayed with him but finds it difficult to concentrate as he tries to persuade them that they must keep the signal fire going on the beach.

Jack

- The last democratic thing Jack does is blow the conch to call a meeting to try to remove Ralph as leader. When he fails he feels humiliated and furious and leaves, crying.
- When Jack returns with his new followers he has taken off all his clothes, the last signs of his civilised upbringing, and he feels "...safe from shame or self-consciousness behind the mask of his paint". (The "mask" hides any last traces of the way he was brought up and gives him a new identity.)
- Leaving the pig's head as an offering to the beast, as if the beast was a god, shows that Jack has lost all sense of civilised values. Jack now steals what he wants – the fire – without any guilt. Jack tries to tempt Ralph's group to join him with the promise of a feast with fun and roast meat.
- Jack sees himself as an all-powerful leader and, like a typical dictator, has trained his followers to say, "The chief has spoken!" (Hitler's Nazis had to say, "Heil (hail) Hitler!")
- During the pig hunt Jack is happy because he enjoys using his skill and having meat to eat, but even more because he enjoys the power and cruelty of killing.
- Jack is also cunning and chooses to attack a sow that is helpless as she is feeding her babies, rather than a boar, which is dangerous.
- Jack's evil is increasing at a great rate.

Piggy

- Piggy's rational mind makes it hard for him to believe Ralph has seen the beast, but, when he is convinced of its reality he is frightened.
- Piggy shows his understanding of people when he warns Ralph that insulting Jack and his hunters is dangerous.
- When Jack leaves Piggy is delighted and feels they are better off without him. He is so pleased he even helps collect wood.