

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1: The Sound of the Shell

A plane evacuating British boys has been shot down in the Pacific. The boys have been ejected safely from the plane and have landed on a remote island. With no adult supervision, they attempt to establish order and a plan for survival. They elect a chief (Ralph) and he selects Jack Merridew, a militant choir bully, to rule over the choir, who become hunters. We also meet Piggy in chapter 1. Piggy is fat, suffers from asthma, and has no social skills. He immediately becomes the target of the other boys who make fun of him. Piggy finds a conch shell and shows Ralph how to blow it. The sound of the shell calls the boys together for assemblies and to discuss important matters. At each assembly, the boy holding the conch is the only one allowed to speak. At the assembly, Jack, Simon, and Ralph decide to explore the island. They confirm their suspicions that they are on an island. Towards the end of chapter 1, the three explorers find a trapped pig. The pig gets away.

Chapter 2: Fire on the Mountain

Chapter 2: The three boys return from their exploration and call an assembly. One of the littleuns mentions a snake thing, a beastie, which sends fear throughout the group. They debate its existence and determine the littleuns were having nightmares. Ralph decides they need to make a fire on the mountain as a rescue signal. They use Piggy's glasses to light the fire. The fire rages out of control. One of the littleuns dies in the conflagration (a fancy word for large fire). Piggy and Jack argue.

Chapter 3: Huts on the Beach

Chapter 3: Jack is obsessed with hunting pigs although he has yet to catch one. Ralph and Simon work on the huts. Everyone else plays. Jack has become savage in his quest for blood. Ralph and Jack argue. Simon wanders off, helps the littleuns get fruit, and continues to an isolated location.

Chapter 4: Painted Faces and Long Hair

Chapter 4: Roger and Maurice bully the littluns on the beach. They are still, however, held back by rules they learned in civilization. Jack paints his face for hunting. His mask liberates him from the rules of civilization. He leads the boys on a hunting expedition. As Jack and the hunters are out, a ship passes by. Ralph realizes the hunters have let the fire go out. He races to the top, but is unable to light it in time. Jack and the hunters return with a pig. Ralph and Jack argue. Jack punches Piggy in the gut. One of Piggy's lenses from his glasses breaks. The boys cook the pig and have a feast. Ralph announces a meeting.

Chapter 5: Beast From Water

Chapter 5: Ralph tries to set things in order. He reestablishes rules regarding the fire and where to go to the bathroom. The subject of the beast is brought up. Jack argues the island is too small for a beast. One of the boys claims the beast comes from the sea. The boys argue. Simon suggests that they are the beast. They all make fun of him. The arguing continues. Jack storms away from the meeting with his hunters, who make horrific sounds in the darkness. Piggy begs Ralph to call them back with the conch. He longs for grown ups to make things right.

Chapter 6: Beast from Air

Chapter 6: A plane is shot down high above as the children sleep. A dead parachutist lands on the island, stuck in the rocks and trees. Samneric see the dead parachutist and mistake it for the beast. The boys hunt for the beast. They can't find it. Jack thinks he's found a good fort from which to throw rocks at people. After not finding the beast, Ralph notices the fire has gone out. None of the others, especially Jack, seem to care.

Chapter 7: Shadow and Tall Trees

Chapter 7: The hunt for the beast continues. The boys come across a pig run and Ralph sticks a boar in the nose with a spear. The boar escapes. The boys act out a pig hunt with Robert playing the part of the pig. Even Ralph enjoys the spectacle. The quest for the beast continues until evening. Jack, Ralph, and Roger agree to scale the mountain. The three boys see the dead parachutist who they mistake for the beast and run away as fast as they can.

Chapter 8: Gift for the Darkness

Chapter 8: Jack calls a meeting, insults Ralph, and asks for Ralph to no longer be chief. Nobody else agrees. Jack, embarrassed, leaves the tribe and goes into the forest. The assembly continues. Simon suggests they go up the mountain. Piggy suggests they build the fire on the beach since the beast is on the mountain. The boys gather wood. The littluns sing and dance. Roger, Bill, Maurice, and other biguns escape into the woods, following Jack. Simon has also disappeared into his secret spot. The hunters track down a pig and kill it. They chop off its head and offer it to the beast as a sacrifice. Flies swarm. The hunters race back to the beach to steal fire. Simon arrives at the pig's head after the hunters have left. He imagines the pig's head is speaking to him. The pig's head tells Simon he can't escape. Jack's hunters raid Ralph's camp for fire and invite the others.

Chapter 9: The View to a Death

Chapter 9: Simon passes out and wakes up. He explores, discovers the truth about the beast, and heads immediately to the beach to tell the others. Meanwhile, all the boys have left the original camp to join Jack's hunters. Even Ralph and Piggy go. There's a dispute. It rains. Jack and his hunters begin their chant. Simon appears from the forest. They kill him. The dead parachutist is driven by the wind, over the boys, and out to sea. After the storm ceases, the boys gather around dead Simon as his body is washed out to sea.

Chapter 10: The Shell and the Glasses

Chapter 10: Ralph, Piggy and Samneric are the only ones left in the original tribe. Ralph and Piggy express their horror over witnessing/participating in Simon's murder. Jack and his crew have taken up residence at the fort. Roger approaches and is told of one of the boys (Wilfred) being tied up and whipped. Jack and his tribe have been transformed into savages. They plot to steal fire. They raid Ralph and Piggy's camp and steal Piggy's glasses.

Chapter 11: Castle Rock

Chapter 11: Piggy declares his intention to confront Jack and demand his glasses back. The four boys go to castle rock, conch in hand. Ralph blows the conch at the fort entrance. Ralph and Jack spar. Ralph demands Piggy's glasses. Jack's savages tie up Samneric. Piggy tries to talk sense into the savages. Roger wedges the giant rock loose. It smashes the conch and knocks Piggy off the cliff. Jack and the others throw spears at Ralph, who runs away.

Chapter 12: Cry of the Hunters

Chapter 12: Ralph flees and returns at night to speak with Samneric who are the new guards. They warn Ralph to go away. Ralph learns the tribe will hunt him the next day like a pig. Roger is sharpening a stick at both ends. Ralph hides in a thicket. One of the twins gives away Ralph's location. They eventually fill the thicket with smoke. Ralph charges out and runs for his life. The hunters pursue. Ralph notices the island has caught fire. The hunters chase Ralph down to the beach where he finds a naval officer there to rescue them.