

Lord of the Flies, Chapter 10

Objectives:

- Identify major plot points in *Lord of the Flies*.
- Identify and analyze the development of key symbols in *Lord of the Flies*.
- Identify internal and external conflicts in *Lord of the Flies*.

Plot and Conflict

Chapter 10 of *Lord of the Flies* deals with the aftermath of Simon's death. Simon's death creates both internal and external conflicts for the boys.

The guilt and remorse that Ralph feels about Simon's death is one example of internal conflict in Chapter 10. Ralph's struggle to come to terms with his actions and their horrible results takes place internally, which is why this is an internal conflict. It also shows that despite Ralph's actions, he still has a conscience and an understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

External conflict also results from Simon's death. At the beginning of the chapter, Ralph and Piggy debate whether Simon's death was murder or an accident. This debate between these two characters is an example of an external conflict, or a conflict between a character and an outside force. In this case, the conflict is between two characters.

In contrast to the remorse and guilt that Ralph feels, Jack refuses entirely to acknowledge what happened. Jack's lack of understanding, empathy, or awareness of his actions shows how far he has strayed from the moral and legal rules of civilized society.

To further emphasize this, Jack returns to Ralph's camp in the middle of the night with two other boys and attacks Ralph, Sam, Eric, and Piggy as they sleep. The ensuing fight between these characters is another example of external conflict. This conflict not only adds action to the book, but it also progresses the plot. During the fight, Jack steals Piggy's glasses. Without the glasses, Ralph cannot maintain a signal fire and Piggy is practically blind. This event will serve to propel the action in the next chapter of the novel.

Symbolism

A symbol is an object that represents an abstract concept. *Lord of the Flies* contains many symbols, and these symbols develop and evolve as the novel progresses.

Symbol	Meaning	Explanation
--------	---------	-------------

Jack's group	Savagery, disorder	Jack's group breaks away from the laws and morals that define civilized societies. They descend into savagery and chaos. Their lack of remorse for or acknowledgement of Simon's death reinforces this.
Ralph's group	Civility, order	Although Ralph's group does not always make the right choices, they maintain awareness of right and wrong and attempt to govern themselves by following the laws and morals of civilized societies. Their guilt and remorse about Simon's death reinforces this.
The conch shell	Unity, order, Ralph's leadership	At the end of Chapter 10, Piggy mentions that he feared that Jack had come for the conch shell. The conch shell, which has been used to call assemblies and maintain order on the island, is also a symbol of Ralph's leadership. His possession and use of the conch shell is part of the reason he was elected. Piggy knows that Jack views the conch shell as a symbol of Ralph's leadership, which is why Piggy fears that Jack may have come for the shell.

Vocabulary

Understanding vocabulary words can help you to gain more meaning from the work. Following are some vocabulary words from this chapter of the reading.

Word	Definition	Use in Context
------	------------	----------------

befouled (adj.)	dirty	“The green light and the glossy patches of sunshine played over their <u>befouled</u> bodies.”
stifled (adj.)	restrained; suppressed	“‘After the feast,’ said Sam in a <u>stifled</u> voice.”
torrid (adj.)	very hot and dry	“Sitting on the tremendous rock in the <u>torrid</u> sun, Roger received this news as an illumination.”
assimilating (verb)	fully understanding	“He ceased to work at his tooth and sat still, <u>assimilating</u> the possibilities of irresponsible authority.”
barmy (adj.)	crazy or foolish	“‘I mean it,’ whispered Piggy. ‘If we don’t get home soon, we’ll be <u>barmy</u> .’”

Try using these words in your own sentences to improve your understanding and knowledge of them.

Summary

Chapter 10 of *Lord of the Flies* uses conflict to develop the characters and propel the plot toward its climax. The internal conflict that Ralph faces over his role in Simon’s death reinforces the idea that Ralph remains aware of right and wrong and will continue to try to be governed by the laws and order of civilized society. This contrasts with Jack, who faces no internal conflict; his lack of remorse shows his descent from civilization to savagery. These events also serve to reinforce the symbolism Golding uses in his novel to help develop the themes and messages he wants to communicate to the reader. The external conflicts serve to propel the plot. When Jack attacks the camp and steals Piggy’s glasses, he creates a problem that the boys will be forced to address in the next chapter.

Concept Reinforcement

1. Identify one symbol in Chapter 10 and explain its importance.
2. What is one example of external conflict in Chapter 10?
3. Why is it important that Golding showed both groups’ reactions to Simon’s death?