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Language and Literature

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Welcome to the “Good Place”

In the novel *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, the cataclysmic destruction and ultimate fallout of everyone on the island left a devastating impact; it claimed two lives and tainted several others. The event has an irony about it that makes the collapse of society stereotypical for a community so feeble like that to crumble and inevitably bring an end to itself; but what if the title of this book prematurely foreshadowed the chain of events to bring such a cataclysm to the island? What if the island is actually a hell filled with their most horrible nightmares designed to punish them?

On page fourteen, Piggy exclaims ““Didn’t you hear what the pilot said? About the atom bomb? They’re all dead.””, which means that they are hopelessly alone with no one but themselves. Having said that, it wouldn’t be too far off to assume the possibility that they are all dead too and they’re living in an alternate version of consciousness where they believe that they have survived the explosion of the atom bomb. The island embodies this form of a separate reality where they are sentenced to run about their fears and have their sanity severed from their souls.

Jack and the Lord of the Flies share characteristics that establish an immediate resemblance between the twos’ identities. Jack fiercely rejects the existence of the beastie as if attempting to keep it in the closet, “But there *is* no animal” (Golding, 83). At one point, he

ventured to discredit the existence of the beastie to merely being a fictitious element with the capabilities of inflicting the same amount of harm as a dream. The Lord of the Flies and Jack also are both tempters who indirectly advocate breaking the rules on the island; on page 143-144 the Lord of the Flies attempts to persuade Simon that “he is a poor, misguided and unwanted boy”. Jack frequently breaks the rules in their social contract and does not wait for anyone’s approval of his actions “‘I got the conch,’ said Piggy indignantly. ‘You let me speak!’ ‘The conch doesn’t count on top of the mountain,’ said Jack, ‘so you shut up!’” (Golding, 42); after becoming fed up with the rules, he violently quits Ralph’s tribe to form his own cult (Golding, 127) and tempts everyone to come promising “meat and protection”.

In the genesis of Ralph’s chiefship at the beginning of his inauguration as chief, he makes a covenant with everyone on the island that he would be a fair and caring leader. He stays true to this when he appeases a mortified Jack after losing the election for chief by charging him with power over the choir in an effort to create a “bipartisanship” between both parties on page 23, or when Ralph speaks up for Jack’s right of speech with the conch present on page 33. As the story progresses, he begins to lose his part of his identity responsible for his ability to lead and govern as well as keep both parties content and in accord with one another. On page 159, Roger openly discussed that Jack would senselessly beat Wilfred, assumably as a part of Jack’s cult. Being a responsible leader means keeping your people safe from the clutches of diabolical influences; Ralph knowingly admits to being responsible and attributes the failure of the island and the fall of society to his loss of leadership embedded within his identity. Upon the arrival of the naval officer, who poses the question “Who’s boss here?” Ralph has no choice left but to defeatedly respond with the words “I am” (201).