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Lord of the Flies

Mrs. Foley

Jack Merridew Character Development Analysis (character development)

Lord of the Flies, a novel written by William Golding, is an action-packed novel. The book is about a group of school boys in the beginning of WWII who are sent away from England and get stranded on an uncharted island without any adult supervision. The kids are then forced to try to survive on the island and select a leader. One of the characters, Jack Merridew, who was 'running' for mayor, was not selected to lead. However, Jack changed very significantly throughout the story, and changed from a clean, selfish schoolboy to a savage leader.

The first reason is because when they came to the island, all of the boys agreed to select a leader. That leader, however, was not Jack, and instead was Ralph, the main character of the book. "*I ought to be chief,*" said Jack with simple arrogance, *'because I'm chapter chorister and head boy. I can sing C sharp.'* Another buzz.- Pg. #22." This shows that Jack was already full of himself and knew that he should get to be able to be chief. Honestly, I think he should've, mostly because he can sing a C sharp. "*All right, who wants Jack for chief?*"

With dreary obedience the choir raised their hands.

'Who wants me?'

Every hand outside the choir except Piggy's was raised immediately. Then Piggy, too, raised his hand grudgingly into the air.

Ralph counted.

'Im chief then.'''- Pg. #23. During the voting, to Jack's surprise, he was *not* voted chief, and got mad, but he soon learned to accept it and live with it for a bit, until he decided to rebel and turn into a savage.

As chief, the first thing Ralph does is organize a 'fire crew.' The purpose of this is to create a fire, and have it burning all day everyday in case a ship passes by and sees their smoke, then they can get rescued. But as the boys get stranded on the island longer and longer, Jack and some of the others want meat, so Jack organizes a hunt, and they go out to hunt for pigs. While they're out, Jack and some others are supposed to be on fire duty. When Ralph sees a ship go by, he rushes to the top of the mountain to see if the fire duty is up there, and to his surprise, they have gone hunting, leaving the fire to burn down to embers. Ralph is so mad at Jack, even though he got them meat. When Jack arrives at the top of the mountain to show off his prize, Ralph yells at him for not being responsible and watching the fire. *"Then Jack leapt to his feet, slashed off a great hunk of meat, and flung it down at Simon's feet.*

'Eat! Damn you!'

He glared at Simon.

'Take it!'

He spun on his heel, center of a bewildered circle of boys.

'I got you meat!'

Numberless and inexpressible frustrations combined to make his rage elemental and awe-inspiring.

'I painted my face-I stole up. Now you eat-all of you-and I-' - Pg# 74.

In this scene, after Ralph yelled at Jack, Jack got angry and yelled at the rest of the boys about how he was the one who had taken time to hunt meat for them, and that they weren't thankful.

After that, Ralph goes to the bottom of the mountain and blows the conch to summon a meeting.

During this meeting, Jack decides to leave them all and form his own group.

'Who thinks Ralph oughtn't to be chief?'

He looked expectantly at the boys ranged round, who had frozen. Under the palms there was deadly silence.

'Hands up,' said Jack strongly, 'whoever wants Ralph not to be chief?' the silence continued, breathless and heavy and full of shame. Slowly the red drained from Jack's cheeks, then came back with a painful rush. He licked his lips and turned his head at an angle, so that his gaze avoided the embarrassment of linking with another's eye.

'How many think-'

His voice tailed off. The hands that held the conch shook. He cleared his throat, and spoke loudly.

'All right then.'

He laid the conch with great care in the grass at his feet. The humiliating tears were running from the corner of each eye.

'I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you.'

Most of the boys were looking down now, at the grass or their feet. Jack cleared his throat again.

'I'm not going to be a part of Ralph's lot-'

He looked along the right-hand logs, numbering the hunters that had been the choir.

'I'm going off by myself. He can catch his own pigs. Anyone who wants to hunt when I do can come too.'

He blundered out of the triangle toward the drop to the white sand.

'Jack!'

Jack turned and looked back at Ralph. For a moment he paused and then cried out, high-pitched, enraged.

'-No!'

He leapt down from the platform and ran along the beach, paying no heed to the steady fall of his tears; and until he dived into the forest Ralph watched him.-Pg# 127.

After Jack had run off, about everyone else except Samneric, Piggy, Ralph, and some of the littluns went off to follow Jack and become savages. During this time, Jack and the other boys who had joined him, went hunting and killed a sow, then stuck its head onto a stick that was sharpened at both ends.

“'Sharpen a stick at both ends.'

Presently he stood up, holding the dripping sow's head in his hands.

'Where's that stick?'

'Here.'

'Ram one end in the earth. Oh-its rock. Jam it in that crack. There.'

Jack held up the head and jammed the soft throat down on the pointed end of the stick which pierced through into the mouth. He stood back and the head hung there, a little blood dribbling down the stick.”-Pg# 136-137.

They then rejoiced after the kill and threw a giant celebration. During this celebration, they get in such excitement that they end killing a boy named Simon after mistaking him for ‘the beast.’

“Jack leapt on to the sand.

‘Do our dance! Come on! Dance!’

He ran stumbling through the thick sand to the open space of rock beyond the fire. Between the flashes of lightning the air was dark and terrible; and the boys followed him, clamorously. Roger became the pig, grunting and charging at Jack, who sidestepped. The hunters took their spears, the cooks took spits, and the rest clubs of firewood. A circling movement developed and a chant. While Roger mimed the terror of the pig, the littluns ran and jumped on the outside of the circle. Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable.

‘Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!’

Now out of the terror rose another desire, thick, urgent, blind.

‘Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!’

Again the blue-white scar jagged above them and the sulphurous explosion beat down. The littluns screamed and blundered about, fleeing from the edge of the forest, and one of them broke the ring of bigguns in his terror.

‘Him! Him!’

The circle became a horseshoe. A thing was crawling out of the forest. It came darkly, uncertainly. The shrill screaming that rose before the beast was like a pain. The beast stumbled into the horseshoe.

'Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!'

The blue-white scar was constant, the noise unendurable. Simon was crying out something about a dead man on a hill.

'Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood! Do him in!'

The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the center, its arms folded over its face. It was crying out against the abominable noise, something about a body on the hill. the beast struggled forward, broke the ring, and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water. At once the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws."-Pg# 152-153.

In this passage, it shows that they end up killing Simon! In fact, later in the book, they crush Piggy under a rock, and literally destroy him, as his head opens and his brain comes out. Also, in the very end of the book, Ralph is the only one left on his side, because Samneric are captured and forced to be on Jack's side, and they go on a manhunt looking for Ralph so they can hunt him down, cut his head off, and put it on a stick just as they had done to the sow. Ralph ends up living, along with 75% of the other kids, who are rescued.

Throughout this book, Jack has changed from a self-disciplined school boy with lots of respect, to a savage that killed two other boys and did strange rituals.