Chapter 4: Painted Faces and Long Hair

Lord of the Flies — A close study of how characters transform, civilisation erodes, and darkness takes hold.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01

Describe

How characters develop in Chapter 4

02

Explain

How Roger and Jack are changing in this chapter

03

Evaluate

How Jack's use of language conveys his sense of change



STARTER ACTIVITY

Who Is Simon?

Re-read the end of Chapter 3, beginning from *'Simon was not in the bathing pool as they had expected.'* (p67 up to the end of the chapter).Pay close attention to how Golding describes Simon and the secret place he retreats to. Then consider: which adjective best describes him — and why?

Discussion prompt: How is Simon fundamentally different from both Ralph and Jack? Think about what each boy values and how they spend their time alone.

Answers:

Spiritual

Simon seeks solitude and seems connected to nature in a way the other boys are not.

Mysterious

His behaviour is unexplained and sets him apart from the group's priorities.

Sensitive

He notices beauty and feels empathy — qualities rarely shown by Ralph or Jack.

Isolated

He deliberately removes himself from the group, suggesting he does not fully belong.

Students to take notes from the following slide:

Simon vs. Ralph and Jack

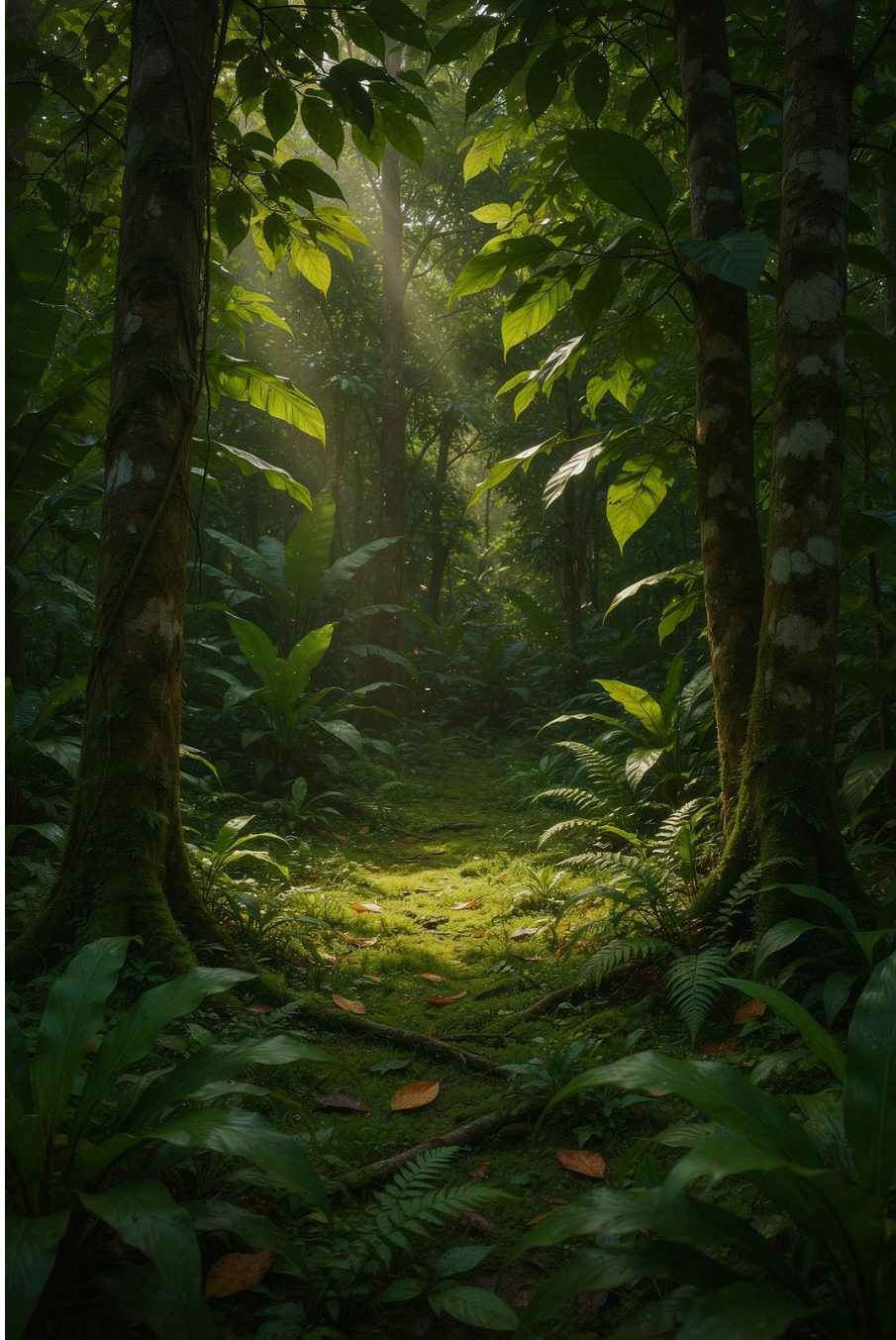
While Ralph focuses on rescue and Jack obsesses over hunting, Simon retreats to a hidden clearing in the forest — a space of natural beauty and quiet. Golding presents him as a figure apart: contemplative, gentle, and almost Christ-like. He helps the littluns, notices the island's wonder, and listens to his instincts rather than social pressure.

Ralph & Jack

- Driven by power, survival, or status
- Focused on the group's social hierarchy
- Increasingly in conflict with each other
- Represent civilisation vs. savagery

Simon

- Driven by inner truth and moral instinct
- Exists outside the power struggle
- Seeks meaning, not dominance
- Represents a spiritual or prophetic figure



ACTIVITY 2

Why Does Setting Matter?

Golding uses the island's setting as far more than backdrop — it is a mirror for the boys' psychological and moral states. As the boys descend into savagery, the island itself shifts from paradise to something threatening. Discuss: why might describing setting be so important in *Lord of the Flies*?

Answers:



Atmosphere & Mood

Heat, light, and darkness shift the emotional tone of each scene, signalling danger or innocence.



Symbolism

The island represents the world in miniature — a testing ground for human nature stripped of society's rules.



Foreshadowing

The landscape hints at what is to come — storms, shadows, and the beast lurking in the wilderness.



Character Reflection

The boys' relationship with the environment reveals their inner state — do they respect it, destroy it, or fear it?

ACTIVITY 3

Roger and Maurice: First Signs of Cruelty

What Do They Do?

Why Might They Do This?

Roger and Maurice came out of the forest. They were relieved from duty at the fire and had come down for a swim. Roger led the way straight through the castles, kicking them over, burying the flowers, scattering the chosen stones. Maurice followed, laughing, and added to the destruction. The three littluns paused in their game and looked up. As it happened, the particular marks in which they were interested had not been touched, so they made no protest. Only Percival began to whimper with an eyeful of sand and Maurice hurried away. In his other life Maurice had received chastisement for filling a younger eye with sand. Now, though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrongdoing. At the back of his mind formed the uncertain outlines of an excuse. He muttered something about a swim and broke into a trot. Roger remained, watching the littluns. He was not noticeably darker than when he had dropped in, but the shock of black hair, down his nape and low on his forehead, seemed to suit his gloomy face and made what had seemed at first an unsociable remoteness into something forbidding. Percival finished his whimper and went on playing, for the tears had washed the sand away. Johnny watched him with china-blue eyes; then began to fling up sand in a shower, and presently Percival was crying again.

Key question: Maurice still feels guilt — but Roger does not. What does this difference tell us about how quickly each boy is changing?

Answers:

Early in Chapter 4, Roger and Maurice deliberately kick over the sandcastles the littluns have been building — destroying the small, innocent world the younger boys had created. Maurice feels a flicker of guilt. Roger feels almost nothing. This moment is small, but significant: it marks the first act of deliberate cruelty in the novel.

What do they do?

- Kick over and destroy the littluns' sandcastles
- Maurice throws sand into Percival's eyes
- Roger picks up stones and throws them near Henry — but not *at* him

Why might they do this?

- The rules of civilisation are weakening
- Without adults, old social conditioning is fading
- It shows the boys beginning to act on impulse rather than conscience

ACTIVITY 4

Roger and the Stones: A Critical Extract

Read the extract carefully. Roger deliberately throws stones at Henry — but aims to miss. Golding writes that an invisible boundary, the memory of parents, teachers, and society, still holds Roger back. But it is wearing thin.

The subsoil beneath the palm trees was a raised beach, and generations of palms had worked loose in this the stones that had lain on the sands of another shore. Roger stooped, picked up a stone, aimed, and threw it at Henry— threw it to miss. The stone, that token of preposterous time, bounced five yards to Henry's right and fell in the water. Roger gathered a handful of stones and began to throw them. Yet there was a space round Henry, perhaps six yards in diameter, into which he dare not throw. Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins. Henry was surprised by the plopping sounds in the water. He abandoned the noiseless transparencies and pointed at the center of the spreading rings like a setter. This side and that the stones fell, and Henry turned obediently but always too late to see the stones in the air. At last he saw one and laughed, looking for the friend who was teasing him. But Roger had whipped behind the palm again, was leaning against it breathing quickly, his eyelids fluttering. Then Henry lost interest in stones and wandered off.

> "Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law."

What has happened to Roger?

What does this foreshadow?

Answers:

What Has Happened to Roger?

He is losing the internal barriers that civilisation once imposed. He still stops short of violence — but his desire to hurt is already present. The stones represent **controlled cruelty**, a step towards something far darker.

What Does This Foreshadow?

Roger will eventually become the most brutal character in the novel. This extract plants the seed of that transformation — the rules are not gone yet, but they are dissolving.

ACTIVITY 5

The Mask: From 'When Henry Tired of His Play' to 'The Mask Compelled' (p.74 paragraph 4- p76)

We will read this passage together as a class. As you listen, pay close attention to both **what** Roger and Jack do, and **how** they behave — their body language, actions, and relationship with each other. The painting of Jack's face is one of the most significant moments in the novel.

Think about: What does Roger do while Jack paints? How does their dynamic shift? Who holds the power in this moment?

Answers:

1

Jack Paints His Face

Using clay and charcoal, Jack creates a mask. He admires his reflection — and is thrilled by what he sees.

2

The Mask Takes Over

Jack no longer feels like himself. The paint provides anonymity — and with it, freedom from guilt and social rules.

3

'The Mask Compelled'

Golding's phrasing is crucial: the mask does not just change Jack's appearance. It changes his *identity*.

The Power of the Painted Mask

Before the Mask

Choirboy bound by rules and conscience



After the Mask

Hunter freed from guilt and civilisation

The paint is not just a disguise — it is a psychological release. By hiding his face, Jack hides his conscience. Golding suggests that beneath the veneer of civilisation, the capacity for violence already exists in all of us. The mask simply gives it permission to emerge.

ACTIVITY 6

Jack Is Becoming Disturbing: Find Your Quotation

Find a quotation from Chapter 4 that shows Jack becoming disturbing or dangerous. Then explain your choice: what specific words or phrases does Golding use, and what effect do they create? Consider language, structure, and what Golding wants the reader to feel.

Challenge: Can you explain *why* Golding chose this specific moment to show Jack's transformation? What does it suggest about the fragility of civilisation?

Answers:

Possible Focus Quotation A

"He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself but at an awesome stranger." — Jack's loss of self-identity through the mask.

Possible Focus Quotation B

"The mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness." — The mask as psychological release from civilised values.

CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY

Key Takeaways: Painted Faces and Long Hair

Chapter 4 is a turning point. The erosion of civilised behaviour — small at first, then accelerating — shows Golding's central argument: that savagery is not imposed from outside, but emerges from within.



Simon

Stands apart — spiritual, sensitive, and apart from the power struggle. A moral counterpoint to Jack.



Roger

Begins to act on cruel impulses while the restraints of civilisation slowly dissolve around him.



Jack

The painted mask liberates him from guilt and identity — he becomes something terrifying and new.



The Island

Setting continues to reflect moral decline — beauty and violence existing side by side.

Next chapter: how does the fire going out — and the missed ship — push Ralph and Jack towards open conflict?