

"I said 'grab them!'"
The painted group moved round Samneric nervously and unhandily. Once more the silvery laughter scattered.
Samneric protested out of the heart of civilization.
5 "Oh. I say!"
" - honestly!"
Their spears were taken from them.
"Tie them up!"
10 Ralph cried out hopelessly against the black and green mask.

"Jack!"
"Go on. Tie them."
Now the painted group felt the otherness of Samneric, felt the power in their own hands. They felled the twins clumsily and excitedly. Jack was inspired. He
15 knew that Ralph would attempt a rescue. He struck in a humming circle behind him and Ralph only just parried the blow. Beyond them the tribe and the twins were a loud and writhing heap. Piggy crouched again. Then the twins lay, astonished, and the tribe stood round them. Jack turned to Ralph and spoke between his teeth.
20 "See? They do what I want."
There was silence again. The twins lay, inexpertly tied up, and the tribe watched Ralph to see what he would do. He numbered them through his fringe, glimpsed the ineffectual smoke.
His temper broke. He screamed at Jack.
25 "You're a beast and a swine and a bloody, bloody thief!"
He charged.
Jack, knowing this was the crisis, charged too. They met with a jolt and bounced apart. Jack swung with his fist at Ralph and caught him on the ear. Ralph hit Jack in the stomach and made him grunt. Then they were facing each
30 other again, panting and furious, but unnerved by each other's ferocity. They became aware of the noise that was the background to this fight, the steady shrill cheering of the tribe behind them.
Piggy's voice penetrated to Ralph.
"Let me speak."
35 He was standing in the dust of the fight, and as the tribe saw his intention the shrill cheer changed to a steady boeing.
Piggy held up the conch and the boeing sagged a little, then came up again to strength.
"I got the conch!"
40 He shouted.
"I tell you, I got the conch!"
Surprisingly, there was silence now; the tribe were curious to hear what amusing thing he might have to say.
Silence and pause; but in the silence a curious air-noise, close by Ralph's
45 head. He gave it half his attention - and there it was again; a faint "Zup!"
Someone was throwing stones: Roger was dropping them, his one hand still on the lever. Below him, Ralph was a shock of hair and Piggy a bag of fat.
"I got this to say. You're acting like a crowd of kids."

The boeing rose and died again as Piggy lifted the white, magic shell.
50 "Which is better - to be a pack of painted niggers like you are, or to be sensible like Ralph is?"
A great clamour rose among the savages. Piggy shouted again.
"Which is better - to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?"
55 Again the clamour and again - "Zup!" Ralph shouted against the noise.
"Which is better, law and rescue, or hunting and breaking things up?"
Now Jack was yelling too and Ralph could no longer make himself heard.
Jack had backed right against the tribe and they were a solid mass of menace
60 that bristled with spears. The intention of a charge was forming among them; they were working up to it and the neck would be swept clear. Ralph stood facing them, a little to one side, his spear ready. By him stood Piggy still holding out the talisman, the fragile, shining beauty of the shell. The storm of sound beat at them, an incantation of hatred. High overhead, Roger, with a sense of
65 delirious abandonment, leaned all his weight on the lever.
Ralph heard the great rock long before he saw it. He was aware of a jolt in the earth that came to him through the soles of his feet, and the breaking sound of stones at the top of the cliff. Then the monstrous red thing bounded across the neck and he flung himself flat while the tribe shrieked.
70 The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist. Piggy, saying nothing, with no time for even a grunt, travelled through the air sideways from the rock, turning over as he went. The rock bounded twice and was lost in the forest.
Piggy fell forty feet and landed on his back across that square, red rock in the
75 sea. His head opened and stuff came out and turned red. Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig's after it has been killed. Then the sea breathed again in a long slow sigh, the water boiled white and pink over the rock; and when it went, sucking back again, the body of Piggy was gone.

niggers (50): negroes (an offensive term)

bristled with spears (60): contained a large number of spears sticking out

talisman (63): a lucky charm

Understanding and Appreciating

- 1 What is meant by the phrase 'out of the heart of civilization' (line 4)?
- 2 What is the effect of the constant description of Jack's boys as 'the painted group' or 'the tribe'?
- 3 What is implied by the fact that Jack 'spoke between his teeth' (lines 18-19)?
- 4 In what way is it a moment of crisis, when Ralph charges Jack (line 26)?
- 5 What causes the boys 'cheering' (line 32) to turn to 'boeing' (line 36)?
- 6 Explain what is meant by 'a sense of delirious abandonment' (lines 64-65).
- 7 What is the symbolic implication of the breaking of the conch?
- 8 Which two parts of the description of Piggy's death compare it to that of a pig's (lines 70-78)?