



First Rate Tutors

Lord Of The Flies

Model Answers

- **Four Model Answers**
- **Eight Exam Questions**
- **Quotes & Revision Notes**

Model Answers

What is the significance of the “world of grown-ups” in the *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- **how Golding presents the grown-ups in the novel**
- **how Golding uses the children to reveal the grown-ups in the novel**

In his allegorical novel, “Lord of the Flies,” William Golding cleverly presents the significance of grown-ups through the boys’ admiration and dependence on them. However, the adults also serve as a vivid reminder of the fallen and evil nature of man, which Golding wanted to convey from his experience in the Second World War.

Golding effectively presents the “world of grown-ups” as significant through the appearance of the naval officer at the end of the novel. This appearance is used to convey the boys’ admiration for grown-ups. Ralph feels a sense of relief when he sees the naval officer and the power this grown-up holds is shown through the vivid description of him. We are told that he dons a ‘white’ uniform with a ‘row of gilt buttons’ and this gives Ralph the reassurance that the order civilisation has returned. The colour white is used as a symbol of purity - yet, there is a strong sense of irony in this encounter. When Ralph sees the officer, he cries for “the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart.” The “innocence” that Ralph weeps for has been already destroyed by the boys and how quickly they descended from evil into chaos. However there is a deep sense of irony in this encounter as we realise the naivete in Ralph’s relief. Indeed it is the grown-ups who started the war that led the boys to be stranded on this island. Thus the naval officer is a reminder of this as his primary role is to kill enemies in battle. Therefore the colour “white” is revealed to be merely a façade as the officer is far from innocent and he certainly does not represent peace. In fact, the white uniform he wears is a thin cover for the bloodshed and the mass murder caused by men like him who kill each other in war. Contextually, this is significant as Golding uses this encounter to convey his experiences in the Second World War. He mentions that before the war, he believed in the “perfectibility of social man,” yet the war revealed to him the “vileness” done “beyond all words” by man in the grown-up world. Thus this naval officer is engaged in a brutal war and he acts much like the boys acted towards each other. Much like the boys who kill Piggy and Simon, he has in common with them the ability to kill other people without feeling any emotion. This encounter highlights that the children, like the grown-ups, are all suffering from the terrible “disease of being human.”

Furthermore, the “world of grown-ups” is presented as being civilised and a source of guidance for the boys. The boys model their decisions based on what

and moral behaviour – and ultimately his death points to the destruction of these two virtues.

Finally, the murder of Piggy is powerful in illustrating his importance as a character in the novel, as it shows that there is no longer any order among the boys. The shocking description of his death goes against what we as readers associate with childhood, as well as the innocence we perceive within children. Golding vividly depicts how the “rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist.” This savage death hauntingly echoes the manner in which the boys killed the sow earlier on in the novel: “At once the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore...” This animalistic slaughter of Piggy, much like the pig, shows how the boys have descended into a brutal, Darwinian existence as they have been reduced to their bare, animal instincts. This animalistic existence is further echoed when we witness Piggy’s dead body: “His head opened... Piggy's arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig's after it has been killed.” Golding uses the simile as this powerfully connects Piggy to an animal – much like the other boys appear to also function as animals. However, as he is the weakest among the clan thus he has been sacrificed in a brutal and senseless death, showing how living outside of the social constraints of society has reduced the boys to mere primates and only the fittest among them can survive. Hence Piggy’s death is important in illustrating the fact that civilisation and the threat of punishment is vital for a functioning society. Without the imposition of strict, social controls, even the most innocent of humans has the capacity to become a cruel and barbaric individual who preys on the weakest beings within his group.

To conclude, Piggy serves as an important character as he highlights the fact that humans can aspire to be good, civilised and logical people. Piggy is an emblem of this aspiration and he plays an important role in showing the highest values that humans can aspire to. However the boys’ descent into savagery and his eventual death also highlights the depths human nature can sink to. Therefore his character shows the importance of placing the social constraints of civilisation on people, to ensure that we as individuals do not descend into the animalistic people that we are capable of becoming.