

LORD OF THE FLIES

In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the group of boys marooned on an island descend into what Thomas Hobbes called a 'state of nature'. This extract from the book can be shown with the film clip of Piggy's death (1.16 mins).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqrREfjDS-c>

Piggy's voice penetrated to Ralph. "Let me speak." He was standing in the dust of the fight, and as the tribe saw his intention the shrill cheer changed to a steady booing. Piggy held up the conch and the booing sagged a little, then came up again to strength. "I got the conch!" 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 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 booing rose and died again as Piggy lifted the white, magic shell. "Which is better—to be a pack of painted Indians 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?" 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 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 delirious abandonment, leaned all his weight on the lever. Ralph heard the great rock 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. 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 the square red rock in the 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.

This time the silence was complete. Ralph's lips formed a word but no sound came. Suddenly Jack bounded out from the tribe and began screaming wildly. "See? See? That's what you'll get! I meant that! There isn't a tribe for you any more! The conch is gone—" He ran forward, stooping. "I'm chief!"

Viciously, with full intention, he hurled his spear at Ralph. (Lord of The Flies, pages 258-261).