*Lord of the Flies*

What would it feel like to be stranded on an island? What changes would one go through? In the novel *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, many young English boys are stranded on an island during World War II. The boys are involuntary placed into a difficult situation. They are forced to have responsibilities, and must attempt to make a semi-civilized society without the guidance of adults. The major object standing in the way of this society from forming, are the differences between leadership styles. Ralph, a main character, wants order and rules; whilst, Jack, another main character, wants to have fun. Unfortunately, one secondary character and two primary characters perish while under their management. The boy with the mulberry birth mark died in the fire, Simon died in the hands of the savage mob, and Piggy died in the hands of Roger. Jack is not responsible for the death of these boys. He did not order the death of any individual, he did not command the boys to become savage and, and he was not the only one who took part of the deaths. These young naive boys are placed onto and island and forced to make their own decisions. Tragedy is bound to strike.

Many mishaps arise under the supervision of Ralph and Jack, including a fire that kills many. This fire is essential to the rescue of the boys who are stranded on the island. The boys attempt to maintain the fire with excessive care and discipline. Jack is not responsible for this fire that kills the littluns. He is not to take blame because he did not order their death. He started it with the intentions of helping. He has the support of the chief who wants the fire; in fact, it was Ralph’s idea to start it. Ralph waves the conch claiming, “’We must make smoke on top of the mountain, we must make a fire’” (Golding pg.37). Ralph was adamant to have flame. There is more than one participant, this means it cannot fall to one, especially not on Jack. The book includes that “even the smallest boys, unless fruit claimed them, brought little pieces of wood” (pg.41). Everyone made an effort, even the smallest and most helpless boys. Another example of a death that occurred without the order of Jack was Piggy’s. Roger murdered Piggy without the commands of Jack. Before the occurrence of Piggy’s passing, Roger, “ceased to work at his tooth and sat still, assimilating the possibilities of irresponsible leadership” (pg.176). Roger is constantly thinking about what he could get away with. In the moment Roger recognises what he can get away with, when he, “leaned all his weight on the leaver … the rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee, … Piggy fell forty feet and landed on his back across that square” (pg. 200). Roger is pushing his boundaries and killing without the guidance of his chief. Roger is at fault for murdering Piggy, not Jack. Jack did not order the death of the littluns by burning them in the fire, and he did not order the death of Piggy; therefore, he cannot be responsible.

Ultimately, anyone who is stranded on an island is bound to go through changes. This could result in positive or negative effects. In this case it was negative. The boys turned to savagery and bloodthirst. This was not a command from Jack who became chief of the ‘savage side’. Jack calls out to the boys to make a revote and says “’who thinks Ralph oughtn’t to be chief?’… ‘hands up how many think?’” (pg. 140). Seemingly being opposed, no one raised their hand; Jack solemnly walks away humiliated. Later on, with the tasks occupying the boys, the majority of the biguns leave to go with Jack. Free to make their own decisions, the boys fall to savagery and bloodthirst. Their motives of wanting to have fun and the exclusion of rules compelled them to leave. Jack gave the boys a choice, he says, “Anyone who wants to come can too” (pg. 140). A major reason why the boys may have wanted to go, was the excitement of the hunt. The extent of the boys’ need for the kill is surprising. The novel states that “they agreed passionately out of the depths of their tormented private lives” (pg.146). Jack never ordered them to hunt, the boys chose to. The danger, the excitement, the blood is too much to resist, that they could not say no. The boys easily obey Jack and inflict pain without remorse. Every boy that went with Jack had a choice. They were not forced.

Lastly, when multiple people are involved in a murder, how many people are given consequences? All of them. Whether it be first degree or second degree or less. All participants are charged; the blame does not fall directly to one person, but to all. In the novel, Simon dies a brutal death. The boys mistake Simon for the beast; it is understandable for why they could not see who he is. He is described as “A thing crawling out of the forest. It came darkly, uncertainly… the beast stumbled into the horseshoe” (pg.168). The imagination of the boys takes over, and they are not able to see that this is Simon and not the beast. Therefore, the boys, “*Kill the Beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood! Do him in!”* (pg. 168). The narrator says, “The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock… the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws” (pg.168). This quote describes the brutality and the extent in which the boys killed Simon. They are savage and murderous little beasts together. The blame should not be directly poured onto Jack, just because he is the leader of the savage side, and held the ritual that unfortunately lead to Simons death. Because of the collaboration, not just one individual can take the blame. Even Ralph and Piggy who were the most cultured “found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society” (pg.166). One would not say that Ralph is responsible for Simons death, therefore Jack, cannot be either. Understandably, one may argue that Jack never ordered the death of anyone, but he did order the death of Ralph; he wanted to get rid of the last bit of civilization on the island. Ralph was hunted and smoked out of the thickets. He has spears thrown at him from the ululation of boys that swept across the island. Jack commanded that Ralph cease to live any longer. However, Ralph did not die in the end of the book. Therefore, he would only be liable for the attempted murder of Ralph. This would be a different topic to discuss since he is still alive in the conclusion of the novel, thereby hard to predict.

Jack should not be blamed for Simon, Piggy, or the littluns’ deaths. To be responsible he would have had to murder them himself or at least order their deaths. He is not responsible for the boys falling savage either. In fact, they had a choice to follow Jack or stay with Ralph. In the novel *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, the problems were inevitable. A person in a society that has no rules or consequences is guaranteed to make awful choices. One will go through changes no matter what. Whether it be good or bad, and this is exactly what happened to the boys. If they were older, it is not to be said that it wouldn’t be the same. But it could have been more cultured, or at least stayed that way for longer. One may think that the age and maturity of the boys obstructed their chance to have a civilized society. But if in their shoes, what changes would this society make?

Cites:

Golding, William. Lord of the Flies: a Novel by. Faber and Faber, 2004.