Name . Per . Date .

***The Lord of the Flies***

The central symbol of Golding’s novel also is gives the book its title: The Lord of the Flies. But what is the Lord of the Flies? How is it linked to humanity, the killing of a pig, and a young, sensitive boy? Why is this central symbol a lord of “flies” rather than something else? Answering these questions leads you to a closer understanding of the significance of this important symbol and Golding’s ultimate message about human nature. Read and examine the following scenes closely, then answer the discussion questions relating to each.

The Death of the Sow:

The afternoon wore on, hazy and dreadful with damp heat; the sow staggered her way ahead of them, bleeding and mad, and the hunters followed, wedded to her in lust, excited by the long chase and the dropped blood, They could see her now, nearly got up with her, but she spurted with her last strength and held ahead of them again. They were just behind her when she staggered into an open space where bright flowers grew and butterflies danced round each other and the air was hot and still.

Here, struck down by the heat, the sow fell and the hunters hurled themselves at her. This dreadful eruption from the unknown world made her frantic; she squealed and bucked and the air was full of sweat and noise and blood and terror. Roger ran round the heap, prodding with his spear whenever pigflesh appeared. Jack was on top of the sow, stabbing downward with his knife. Roger found a lodgment for his point and began to push till he was leaning with his whole weight. The spear moved forward inch by inch and the terrified squealing became a high-pitched scream. Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands. The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her. The butterflies still danced, preoccupied in the center of the clearing (135).

1. What 3 adjectives would you use to describe the killing of the sow?
2. In what way is the sow’s death symbolic of lost innocence?
3. What is the significance of the butterflies in the scene? Why are they included?
4. Many critics see this scene as “symbolic rape.” Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?
5. After the sow has been killed, Jack offers her head to the Beast as a gift. Why is this such a significant act? What does it suggest about the hunters?

The Lord of the Flies:

Simon stayed where he was, a small brown image, concealed by the leaves. Even if he shut his eyes the sow’s head still remained like an after-image. The half-shut eyes were dim with the infinite cynicism of adult life. They assured Simon that everything was bad business.

[…] The pile of guts was a black blob of flies that buzzed like a saw. After a while these flies found Simon. Gorged, they alighted by his runnels of sweat and drank. They tickled under his nostrils and played leapfrog on his thighs. They were black and iridescent green and without number; and in front of Simon, the Lord of the Flies hung on his stick and grinned. At last Simon gave up and looked back; saw the white teeth and dim eyes, the blood – and his gaze was held by that ancient, inescapable recognition. In Simon’s right temple, a pulse began to beat on the brain.

[…] “You are a silly little boy,” said the Lord of the Flies, “just an ignorant, silly little boy.” Simon moved his swollen tongue but said nothing.

“Don’t you agree?” said the Lord of the Flies. “Aren’t you just a silly little boy?”

Simon answered him in the same silent voice.

“Well then,” said the Lord of the Flies, “you’d better run off and play with the others. They think you’re batty. You don’t want Ralph to think you’re batty, do you? You like Ralph a lot, don’t you? And Piggy, and Jack?”

Simon’s head was tilted slightly up. His eyes could not break away and the Lord of the Flies hung in space before him.

“What are you doing out here all alone? Aren’t you afraid of me?”

Simon shook.

“There isn’t anyone to help you. Only me. And I’m the Beast.

Simon’s mouth labored, brought forth audible words.

“Pig’s head on a stick.”

“Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!” said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. “You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you? Close, close, close! I’m the reason why it’s a no go? Why things are what they are?”

The laughter shivered again.

“Come now,” said the Lord of the Flies. “Get back to the others and we’ll forget the whole thing.”

Simon’s head wobbled. His eyes were half closed as though he were imitating the obscene thing on the stick. He knew that one of his times was coming on. The Lord of the Flies was expanding like a balloon.

“This is ridiculous. You know perfectly well you’ll only meet me down there –so don’t try to escape!”

Simon’s body was arched and stiff. The Lord of the Flies spoke with the voice of a schoolmaster.

“This has gone on far enough. My poor, misguided child, do you think you know better than I do?”

There was a pause.

“I’m warning you. I’m going to get angry. D’you see? You’re not wanted. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island! So don’t try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else –”

Simon found he was looking into a vast mouth. There was a blackness within, a blackness that spread.

“ –Or else,” said the Lord of the Flies, “we shall do you. See?” Jack and Roger and Maurice and Robert and Bill and Piggy and Ralph. Do you. See?”

Simon was inside the mouth. He fell down and lost consciousness.

1. Is Simon really speaking to a pig’s head on a stick? If not, what is *really* happening?
2. Why is Simon the perfect character to receive this message from the Lord of the Flies? Why is he especially appropriate to be the one to hear this warning?
3. What is the Lord of the Flies? Its name is related to the Hebrew name “Beelzebub,” which is the name of a devil; is the Lord of the Flies a devil? If so, explain its motives. If not, what is it instead?
4. Why is a pig’s head on a stick symbolic of “The Lord of the Flies”? What is the significance of this image? What does it suggest?
5. Do you agree with the idea that there is something inside human nature that is inherently evil, destructive, and cruel? Is the “Lord of the Flies” ‘part of us’? Why? Or why not? Write a thorough answer of at least 5 sentences.