AQA English Literature GCSE

Lord of the Flies: Character Profile

Simon

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Simon

Character Summary



Simon is a **Christ-like figure** who represents true goodness on the island, consistently showing kindness and empathy to those around him. He is the only character who understands what the **"Beast"** really is. While the other boys imagine a frightening creature living in the forest, Simon realises ***"Maybe it's only us."*** His understanding becomes clearer during his encounter with the **Lord of the Flies**, where he recognises that the Beast represents **mankind's innate evil.**

Despite having a moral understanding that the other boys lack, Simon is frequently dismissed. Golding uses Simon to highlight that those who speak the truth and offer reason are often ignored. The boys reject Simon's revelation as it forces them to admit their own inner darkness. He dies before he can explain the truth fully, which shows humanity's refusal to confront its own evil and that genuine goodness cannot survive in a world that is falling into **savagery**.

Key Chapters and Events

Chapter	Simon's Key Moments
1	• Simon is introduced and chosen by Ralph to go on the first expedition to explore the island.
3	• Simon is involved in helping Ralph to build the huts. • Simon feeds the littluns by reaching up to the fruit they can not grab. • Simon finds a sanctuary in nature, where he can be alone from the other boys.
5	• Simon walks alone at night, knowing there is nothing to fear. • Simon speaks up and says the beast is not external, but the boys themselves. They laugh at him.
8	• Simon chooses to climb up the mountain by himself. • Simon has a conversation with the Lord of the Flies (the pig's head on a stick). He falls unconscious.
9	• Simon sees what the boys thought was the "Beast" - it is a parachutist. He sets him free. • Simon runs to tell the boys the truth about the beast. The boys kill Simon in a frenzy, believing he is the creature. Simon's body is taken out by the sea.

How does Simon change throughout *Lord of the Flies*?

Beginning of the text: First Impressions (Chapter 1: The Sound of the Shell)



Simon is introduced as a ***"skinny, vivid little boy"*** suggesting he has a natural brightness. Golding often associates him with **light imagery,** saying **"his face was glowing",** hinting that he represents goodness and kindness on the island.

When he is introduced, he is recovering from fainting: ***"The choir boy who had fainted sat up against a palm trunk."*** This makes him seem weak and fragile compared to the stronger, more confident boys like Ralph and Jack. When Ralph chooses him to join the first expedition to explore the island, ***"the boys round Simon giggled."*** Even though he is kind and perceptive, these qualities are not valued by young schoolboys.

Simon's Transformation (Chapter 8: Gift for the Darkness)

When Simon sees the pig's head on the stick (an offering for the beast), Golding describes its eyes as having ***"the infinite cynicism of adult life"*** that ***"assured Simon that everything was a bad business."*** He realises that adults, who once represented reassurance and rescue, are not inherently good and the world is corrupt.

The pig's head becomes the **Lord of the Flies**, a **symbol** of evil. The name links to **Beelzebub**, referring to the devil or Satan. In Simon's hallucination, the Beast mocks him: ***"Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!"*** He reveals that the source of evil is not an external creature but mankind's innate evil. The Lord of the Flies says ***"I'm part of you"*** which reflects Golding's core message that evil cannot be escaped, but is essential to human nature.

Simon struggles to resist the beast but his ***"swollen tongue"*** and ***"mouth laboured"*** shows his difficulty in confronting the truth. The Lord of the Flies is threatening, calling him ***"a silly little boy."*** Simon is powerless and vulnerable against the force of evil, falling unconscious as he is overwhelmed by the intensity of the interaction. When he wakes up, Golding describes that ***"the light was unearthly",*** showing Simon's **enlightenment**, fully understanding the truth about the beast and mankind's darkness.



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End of the Text: Simon's Death (Chapter 9: A View to a Death)

The boys, including Piggy and Ralph, murder Simon in a frenzy driven by fear, hysteria and **mob violence.** Golding shows how reason collapses entirely, and savagery triumphs over civilization, as the boys revert to their primal instincts.Simon is depicted as vulnerable and weak: ***"The beast was on its knees in the centre, its arms folded over its face."*** Golding switches between human and animal **imagery** to show how the boys lose all ability to recognise Simon. He is **dehumanised**, referred to as a ***"thing", "the beast"*** and ***"it."***

Golding's description of the attack is barbaric: "... ***the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore."*** The **listing** of violent **verbs** depicts the boys as predatory animals. Golding warns about the dangers of acting as a group as they lose individual responsibility, becoming capable of murder. Simon is described as ***"crying out against the abominable noise"*** as he tries to communicate the truth. He is drowned out by the frenzy, showing how humans refuse to face the darkness inside them.

After his death, the clouds ***"Let down the rain like a waterfall"*** which ***"dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness"*** Simon looks angelic, remaining spiritual even after death. With his death, innocence and goodness disappear from the island and the boys' descent into evil is now **irreversible**. Golding uses his murder to show the **futility** of human life and how humans are capable of the most barbaric acts.

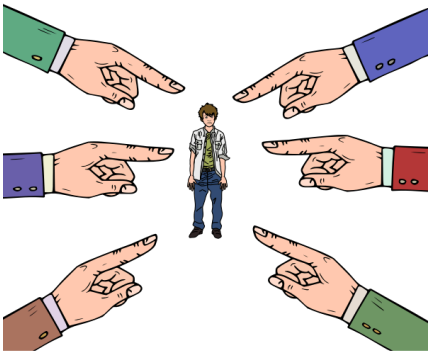


Key Themes

Civilisation vs Savagery

Simon, like Ralph and Piggy, respects the order and rules that the boys initially try to create on the island. He recognises the importance of cooperation and understands the priorities of survival and maintaining **civilisation**. Simon chooses to help Ralph build the shelters: ***"All day I've been working with Simon. No one else. They're off bathing or eating or playing"*** (Chapter 3: Huts on the Beach.) This shows his commitment to responsibility and community as most of the boys gradually **descend** into savagery and violence through hunting. Golding suggests that a society can only function effectively when individuals work together rather than following their own desires.

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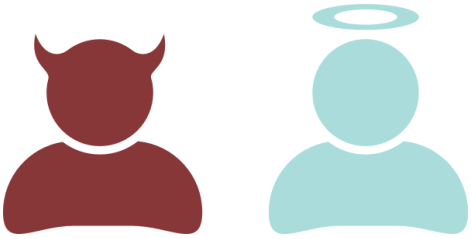


Simon's death is one of the most savage moments in the novel. It is a **turning point** where savagery triumphs over civilisation, as the boys tear apart Simon in a frenzied **mob**. The boys can no longer return to order or reason. Golding highlights how fragile civilisation is and how it can be easily destroyed when fear and violence take over.

Human Nature and Evil

Simon is a figure of internal goodness, depicted as pure and innocent. Unlike the other boys, His **morality** comes from within rather than from adults and society. He helps the Littluns, defends Piggy and supports Ralph in building the shelters, embodying kindness and compassion. He is the only character who realises mankind is the true source of evil, but the boys shut him down whenever he tries to express this uncomfortable truth. However, despite recognising humanity's **innate** capacity for evil, Simon is ultimately powerless to prevent it. Although he knows the truth, he is ultimately destroyed by the very evil he tries to warn the boys about.

Simon remains the only truly good and moral character in the novel. Even more civilised characters like Piggy and Ralph are responsible for Simon's murder and give in to their **primal impulses**. Golding suggests Simon's level of genuine goodness is rare. His murder marks the full release of uncontrollable savagery on the island and mankind's inability to confront the truth about their **innate evil.**



Fear and The Beast

Simon understands the truth from the very beginning: "***Maybe there is a beast...maybe it's only us.***" (Chapter 5: Beast from Water)**.** He has a unique insight that the Beast is not a physical creature but the boys' innate evil which drives their barbaric behaviour. While Piggy and Ralph dismiss the **beast** as a childish monster, and Jack uses it to manipulate the boys and gain power, Simon recognises the real danger comes from within themselves.

He understands that an external, physical beast could not possibly exist: "***A beast with claws that scratched, that sat on a mountain top, that left no tracks and yet was not fast enough to catch Samneric.***" (Chapter 6: Beast from Air)**.** He sees that the boys' description is contradictory and impossible. Simon is not swept up by **hysteria** but able to think logically, showing his resistance to fear.

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In a similar way, Simon is never afraid of the island or intimidated by the dark. He often moves throughout the island at night to visit his secret sanctuary alone and volunteers to go back down the mountain at night to update Piggy, knowing that the island is not the source of darkness.

When Simon climbs the mountain and discovers the Beast is actually the corpse of a dead pilot caught in his parachute, he ***"freed…the figure from the wind's indignity."*** (Chapter 9: A View to a Death.***)*** The boys had believed the parachutist was the Beast but ironically it is a human. Golding uses Simon's discovery to emphasise the true beast is mankind. Eventually, the boy's overwhelming fear of the beast drives them to attack Simon, showing that the evil within the boys has been unleashed.

Context

Religious allegory/parallels



In his essay *Fable*, Golding describes Simon as a "Christ-figure" or an **allusion** to Jesus, who is "a lover of mankind, a visionary" and reaches truth "not only by reason but by intuition." Simon's spiritual insight separates him from the other boys and makes him the source of moral truth on the island.

There are clear **parallels** between Simon and Jesus. Both seek to reveal the truth about humanity and suffer violent deaths at the hands of the people they are trying to help. Jesus dies for **salvation**, while Simon dies after discovering and attempting to reveal the truth about innate human evil.

Simon's fainting spells emphasise his role as a spiritual character. When he loses consciousness, he seems to exist between the physical and spiritual worlds, open to a higher level of understanding. He also makes subtle prophecies, possessing an **omniscient** insight that none of the other boys have.

His reassurance to Ralph: ***"I just think you'll get back alright"*** (Chapter 7: Shadows and Tall Trees) **foreshadows** his own death and Ralph's rescue. Through these **religious parallels**, Simon becomes a figure of sacrifice, revelation and reflects the struggle between goodness and human evil. These religious parallels reinforce Golding's suggestion that society often rejects those who reveal uncomfortable truths about human nature.

Key Relationships

Relationship with the other boys

Simon, despite being the most perceptive boy on the island, is consistently overlooked. This makes him afraid to speak out despite his insight. Feeling like an outsider, he experiences "***a perilous necessity to speak; but to speak in an assembly was a terrible thing...***" (Chapter 5: Beast from Water). His fear of being ridiculed prevents him from sharing the most important revelation of the novel (the truth about the beast.) Even Piggy, who is also mocked, calls Simon ***"cracked"*** (Chapter 8: Gift for the Darkness) showing how Simon's difference isolates him.

When Simon attempts to explain that the **Beast** is not a physical creature, his ***"...effort fell about him in ruins; the laughter beat him cruelly and he shrank away defenseless to his seat"*** (Chapter 5: Beast from Water) The **metaphor** of the laughter that "***Beat him"*** shows how violent the boy's rejection is. Simon's relationship with the other boys reveals Golding's message that society often ignores those who have the most insightful wisdom and goodness can be destroyed by cruelty and the need to conform.



Relationships with the Littluns' and Piggy

Simon is the only older boy who cares for the **Littluns**, who are helpless when left on their own. Golding describes how ***"Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach, pulled off the choicest from up in the foliage, passed them back to endless outstretched hands."*** (Chapter 3: Huts on the Beach). Simon's feeding of the littluns **echoes** Jesus' feeding of the five thousand, presenting Simon as a spiritual figure. He finds the ***"choicest"*** fruit and gives the littluns ***"double handfuls",*** emphasising his generosity.



Simon is the only character that shows true, genuine kindness towards Piggy, defending him against Jack's cruelty. He recognises Piggy's contribution of intelligence and reason on the island, giving him credit for his glasses, defending that ***"He helped that way".*** (Chapter 2: Fire on the Mountain.) This reinforces his role as the **moral centre** of the novel. Simon has appreciation for every member of their 'society' on the island, especially the most vulnerable.

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Relationship with Nature

Golding describes how Simon walks into the forest with an ***"accustomed tread",*** (Chapter 3: Huts on the Beach). This illustrates how he already feels comfortable on the island while the other boys approach the island with fearful suspicion. Simon finds peace in his own private sanctuary, sitting in ***"honey-coloured sunlight." (Chapter 3: Huts on the Beach).*** This **light imagery** presents Simon as finding peace and harmony within nature, which contrasts to the boys who are fearful of the dark island.



The other boys terrorise the island by killing sows and destroying trees **mirroring** their growing savagery, while Simon shows a gentle appreciation for the natural world showing his moral purity and innocence.

In death, Simon is returned to nature. Golding describes how "***Softly, surrounded by a fringe of bright inquisitive creatures...Simon's dead body moved out towards the open sea"*** (Chapter 9: A View to a Death.) The sea treats him gently and the sea-creatures form a protective circle around him, honouring his purity and goodness in death.

Golding suggests Simon cannot exist on an island or society overtaken by human savagery because he belongs to the uncorrupt innocence of the natural world. Simon's connection to the purity of the natural world highlights how he is incompatible with the darkness and corruption that consumes the other boys.

Key Quotations

"Maybe there is a beast...maybe it's only us" (Chapter 5: Beast from Water)

- Simon suggests to the boys that the Beast does exist. However, he reveals it is not a creature, but the evil inside human beings.
- ***"Only"*** suggests Simon is underestimating how dangerous human evil can be, even though it is more destructive than any imagined monster. By using the **collective** ***"us",*** Simon understands that no one is excluded from human darkness.
- Simon is hesitant, shown through the **repetition** of the word ***"maybe."*** He is nervous as he knows the boys live in denial. They would rather imagine a beast than admit their own evil.
- Golding uses Simon as the voice of **insight** and **moral clarity**, to reinforce the unsettling truth that the real beast is the innate human capacity for savagery.

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"Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness" (Chapter 5: Beast from Water)



- The **adjective** ***"Inarticulate"*** illustrates Simon's struggle in understanding mankind's capacity for evil. He understands a profound truth about humanity but lacks the language to express it. This reflects Golding's own disbelief in discovering the barbaric acts mankind was capable of during his time in active service.

- ***"Mankind's"*** shows that this evil is universal. It belongs to everyone and is not limited to certain people or groups. Golding, through the character of Simon, suggests all humans share this darkness. The **metaphor** of ***"Illness"*** suggests human nature is diseased and corrupted. Simon tries to explain that it is not something the boys can cure or escape.

"However Simon thought of the Beast, there rose before his inward sight the picture of human, at once heroic and sick" (Chapter 6: Beast from Air)

- The **verb** ***"rose"*** suggests something is emerging or becoming clear to Simon. He is having a moment of realisation that the Beast is internal.

- ***"Inward sight"*** suggests Simon has the ability to see the truth, with a deeper understanding than the other boys.



- The **juxtaposition** of man as both ***"Heroic and sick"*** shows Simon's recognition of the **duality** of mankind. This reinforces Golding's message that humans contain the capacity for courage and the potential for horrific cruelty. This duality is what ultimately drives the boys' descent into savagery.

"There isn't anyone to help you. Only me. And I'm the Beast." Simon's mouth laboured, brought forth audible words "Pig's head on a stick." (Chapter 8: Gift for the Darkness)

- The verb ***"Laboured"*** shows Simon's effort to speak. He is determined to confront evil, even when he feels powerless against it. His inability to fight back shows goodness cannot defeat evil.

- Simon rationalises the Lord of the Flies calling it a ***"Pig's head on a stick."*** He attempts to convince himself the Beast is not supernatural but something created by the boys out of fear. He is the only one who tries to directly face the Beast and understand it.



- Golding uses Simon's confrontation with the pig's head to suggest the true danger is the innate human capacity for evil. This internal darkness may be recognised and understood but this does not guarantee the ability to prevent or resist it.

"The beast was harmless and horrible; and the news must reach the others as soon as possible" (Chapter 9: A View to a Death)

- The juxtaposition of ***"harmless and horrible"*** shows Simon's unique insight. He believes the beast is both "***harmless***" because it is not an external creature. However, it is also "***horrible***" as mankind is darker and more evil than any creature they could have imagined.

- The modal verb ***"Must"*** shows Simon's determination to warn the boys. This highlights his selfless nature, feeling a sense of responsibility to protect them.

- Golding uses Simon as a religious allegory, mirroring figures like Jesus. He uses this moment to highlight Simon's role as the only boy who can see past superstition and fear to the deeper reality of human nature. He tries to bring the truth to people, but is killed before he can deliver his message.