Chapter Twelve:

Cry of the Hunters

**Summary:**

1. Ralph considers his options as he tries to hide and avoid danger.
2. He encounters the pig’s head and experiences fear and anger, lashing out and taking away the spear that supported it.
3. Ralph goes to speak to Sam and Eric at Castle Rock, but their manner is discouraging, telling Ralph that Roger has ‘sharpened a stick at both ends’.
4. Ralph becomes aware that he is totally alone.
5. Jack and the hunters track Ralph as if he were an animal.
6. Jack sets most of the island on fire to smoke Ralph out.
7. The smoke from the fire is seen by a passing ship.
8. Ralph, exhausted, collapses on the beach. He looks up to see the friendly face of a rescuing naval officer.

**Why is this chapter important?**

A As Ralph spies on Castle Rock, we appreciate how hard it is for him to come to terms with all that has happened.

B When Ralph sees the remains of the pig’s head we are reminded of Simon’s earlier, very different reaction to the object.

C Ralph fails to see the significance of the sharpened stick, but we realise that he will hunted like a pig.

D When rescuing the boys, the naval officer sees Jack as a little boy, rather than seeing his primitive, underlying aggression and savagery.

E Golding makes it clear that it is only external intervention that saves Ralph from certain death.

**Roger and the Savages:**

Roger has become sadistic. Sam and Eric call him ‘a terror’. He is prepared to kill and behead Ralph, placing his head upon a stick instead of a pig’s head. This is why the stick is sharpened at both ends.

The hunters are now clearly savages. The savages will sweep across the island in line to catch Ralph – communicating (like primitive man) with wavering cries. They lever one of the rocks on the cliff top and it crashes into the thicket, missing him. The savages cheer as it falls – having lost all their humanity.

Under Jack’s direction, the savages set the forest on fire with the aim of smoking Ralph out. The raging fire burns the fruit trees – a valuable food source.

**Rescue at last:**

Ralph, the only boy left who has some vestiges of civilised behaviour, can hear the tribal dancing and see savages keeping lookout.

He regrets his isolation and discovers that Jack intends to hunt him like a pig. As he heads towards the forest, the cries of the hunters sweep the island behind him.

It is ironic that the smoke and fire made to flush out Ralph is their means of rescue. Presumably, if rescue had not come, Ralph would have been murdered and the island would have been destroyed by fire.

**Ralph realises that his life is in danger:**

1. Ralph tries to convince himself that Piggy’s death was an ‘accident’, but he knows that Jack will never let him alone.
2. Sam and Eric tell him that Roger has ‘sharpened a stick at both ends’ – this doesn’t make sense to Ralph, but it suggests to the reader that the tribe plans to put Ralph’s head on a stick, like the pig.
3. The tribe lights a fire to smoke Ralph out. It sounds like a ‘drum-roll’ – the same sound as the fire that killed the littlun. It hints that someone might die in this fire, too.

**SYMBOLISM:** Ralph, the most civilised character, destroys the Lord of the Flies – the symbol of evil and barbarity. In Chapter 11 Roger, the least civilised character, destroyed the conch – the symbol of civilisation and order.

**Golding’s language creates a terrifying atmosphere:**

1. Golding describes the hunt from Ralph’s point of view to emphasise how scared Ralph is.
2. He uses short sentences and lots of punctuation, e.g. ‘Hide, break the line, climb a tree – which was the best after all?’ This speeds up the actions and gives a sense of the panic Ralph’s feeling.
3. Ralph is ‘screaming, snarling, bloody’. Golding uses animal imager to link Ralph to the hunted pigs.

**Ralph is saved by a Naval Officer:**

1. Ralph and the savages run into a naval officer on the beach. Ironically, the fire that was meant to smoke out Ralph has attracted a ship. At their most barbaric, the boys have made sure they’ll return to civilisation.
2. The Officer imagines that it’s been like an adventure story. He’s shocked when Ralph tells him two boys have been killed. Golding is reminding the reader that classic adventure stories present human nature in an unrealistically optimistic way.
3. Ralph bursts into tears – he’s been rescued, but he’s lost his innocence. He realises that there is evil in everyone and it’s only held back by society’s rules.
4. Neither civilisation nor barbarity wins at the end of the novel. The savages don’t kill Ralph – who represents civilisation. But the boys go back to a world at war understanding the nature of man’s evil.

**THEME**: Barbarity – The officer’s gun and the warship are reminders that there’s a war going on in the grown-ups world.

**Writing about nature:**

Notice how Ralph is ‘scratched and bruised from his flight through the forest’. He is unable to bathe his wounds, as he does not feel safe from Jack’s tribe ‘by the little stream or on the open beach’.

The hunters ‘had rushed back to the sunny rock as if terrified of the darkness under the leaves’. The hunters are, presumably, afraid of bumping into Ralph rather than afraid of the darkness. At his point in the novel, nature comes to Ralph’s aid as he ‘sneaked forward to the edge of that impenetrable thicket’.

Notice how, in the final chapter, light and dark are used to describe the trees and foliage. This could represent the good and bad in all of us.

**Simon was**

**Things to think about for an A:**

As readers, we are given ‘insight’ into events that the characters do not always have. This is called dramatic irony. How can you tell that Ralph does not appreciate the danger that he is in?

Why does Golding end the book the way he does? Think about the questions that the Naval Officer asks Ralph.

How do we feel about those boys and what has happened once adults arrive?