

Me. Me. Me. LOTF Chapter 7

- **Ralph's Realization (109-110)**

Ralph was suddenly **“aware of the heat” (109)**, aware of his disheveled state, and aware of the general decline of the group using **the memory of his sometime clean self as a standard” (110)**. Out of the blue, after many days (and maybe even weeks or months) of being on a stranded island, Ralph begins to think about some ideas of simple civility and hygiene. Before, they cared about survival of the society and keeping order, but now as they have less to care about and more time to think. I feel this way often as well: when I'm done with my homework, or having just finished any arduous task, I sometimes have a moment of self-reflection that overcomes me in its depth. After running a cross-country race, for example, I sometimes just think about life in general and how that race was such an accomplishment of perseverance and a tribute to diligence. Similarly, Ralph settles down and notices the finer details that **“he discovered with a little fall of his heart that these were the conditions he took as normal now and that he did not mind” (110)**. His **“grey shirt [with the] adventure of washing it” (109)** and the **“dirt[iness], not with the spectacular dirt of boys who have fallen into mud or been brought down hard on a rainy day” (110)** shows Ralph's wonderful ability to look back and realize the situation as a whole; to step back and take a bigger picture. And I feel the same way when I have those sporadic reflections — and it sometimes actually has a dramatic change on my perspective on an idea. This is especially true of my failures, such as a ruined opportunity at performing piano and repetitive mistakes in school on assessments: after those losses, after hours of sulking and teenager-hormonal-misery, I think about the real effect any of those traumas *truly* have on me — just as Ralph discovers the *true downgrade* of life so unnoticed previously — and I think about it in a totally different way. What happened to Ralph is an incredible phenomenon.

- **Batty Simon (111)**

Ralph accuses Simon of being “batty.” Simon denies him and says, **“No, I'm not. I just think you'll get back all right” (111)**, the emphasis and annoyance clearly put on the latter phrase and showing that he truly is “batty,” or a bit crazy. It shows that he's a bit on-edge, just as I am often nowadays with imminent tests and quizzes. I tell a lot of lies nowadays, especially about feelings, sometimes so blatantly incorrect when I'm annoyed to the point of anger — as in Simon's case — that it becomes comical and the situation seems ironic. Like the outcome in the story — **“they suddenly smiled at each other” (111)** — it sometimes breaks up into a wonderful laugh that loosens up everyone's tension and helps the situation blissfully unwind.

- **Daydream of a Memory (112)**

When it's time to slack off, Ralph falls behind, **“lean[ing] against a tree and at once daydreams came swarming up” (112)**. He soon becomes lost in a memory of his past,

civilized life, with a **“bright copper kettle and the plate with the little blue men” (112), “the books [that] stood on the shelf by the bed, leaning together with always two or three laid flat on top because he had not bothered to put them back properly. They were dog-eared and scratched” (112).** It soon becomes a long, happy dream, a way to numb his current difficult situation with none of the conveniences one present in his mind. Now, in high school, I know that life isn’t as difficult as it will get in the future; however, I do know that my prior years in school and life were much less stressful, with no pressure of “real-life” creeping up on me, no tests-every-day-stress or staying-up-all-night-sleepiness or finals-cramming. Often I do think back on the “good ol’ days” of the past, of a life easier and more pleasant; of a life devoid of the difficulties we face today, when **“everything was all right; everything was good-humored and friendly” (112).**

- **Seniority (115)**

Throughout my school years, and especially at Barlow, the most senior class had by far the most power and influence over the other grades. This meant that the weakest and most vulnerable were the lowest class (in high school, the “freshmen,” or “fros”). As a result, the freshmen are often picked upon and many of the movies of a scary high-school life, such as *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, are written from an underclassman’s point of view. This was a bit of a literal link, but Jack said, **“Use a littlun” (115)** when they discussed the need for someone or something to kill or tease, and as a result everyone laughed. But with the younguns being the ones to become the seniors in the future, enduring this temporary torture is something that will only nurture their fiery bullies inside and create the same kind of behavior as they grow up. I just believe this is a very unfair behavior, but it is rooted too deep in our natural instincts (as shown by the island group, who have been separated from society and a school setting for quite a while by now).

- **Not Good Enough (117)**

Jack’s dejected realization that he **“doesn’t remember this cliff ... so this must be the bit of the coast I missed” (117)** proved a major hindering factor in their operation to find the beast. Because he didn’t know the terrain, they ended up taking much longer than expected, which forced them to send Simon back to the camp to tell Piggy that they were going to be out after dark. This was a lot of unnecessary confusion and fuss, and potential danger to the expeditioning group, Simon, and the littluns by themselves. But **“if [they] go back [they] should take hours ... [but] if [they] go across —” (117).** I’ve seen plenty of letdowns similar to this, many in school. The most common ones are the ones when we choose groups for projects, sometimes with supposedly-”smart” partners, who turn out to have some excuse to slack off and not live up to their standards. Similarly, if someone just doesn’t do what they’re assigned and expected to do, whether it is a leader or a “follower” in such a group, a delay is imminent as well.

- **Saving Face (120)**

To kids and adults alike, reputation is an undeniably important possession, and a strong reputation and popularity is something most all of us humans crave by our own nature. To save face by appearing “tough,” not willing to be showed up by Jack, Ralph says, **“I don’t mind” (120)** to the challenge of venturing out in the dark to find the beast that Jack provokes. The interesting thing is that he was **“astonished, he heard his voice come out, cool and casual, so that the bitterness of Jack’s taunt fell powerless” (120)**, and that he made a second reply without stopping himself, **“Oh, not at all” (120)**. Considering how dangerous the situation was and how much he opposed the situation (even after he entered the forest and started questioning his own intentions). But he nonetheless gives in to the challenging soul boys have. I myself try not to keep a reputation of that of a cocky male teenager, but I do occasionally have outbursts against my rational thoughts just to prevent losing face. These arguments are especially prominent at home, where I care most about others and therefore have the most passionate arguments (while in school, my reputation of being non-violent and reserved outweighs this). Staying in character and “looking good” in front of people that believe in you is a must in any society, whether it is our fast-paced, people-ful modern society or the small boy community on a deserted Pacific island — and this leads to a wide range of problems, mostly caused by dishonesty and distrust.