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***Lord of the Flies* Chapter 7**

**Mobs and Mob Mentality:**

**When Ordinary People Follow the Crowd**

**MOB MENTALITY (MOB PSYCHOLOGY):** The term **“mob mentality”** is used to refer to unique behavioral characteristics which emerge when people are in large groups. It is sometimes used disparagingly, as the term “mob” typically conjures up an image of a disorganized, aggressive, panicked group of people. Social psychologists that study group behaviors tend to prefer terms like “[herd behavior](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-herd-behavior.htm)” or “crowd [hysteria](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-hysteria.htm).” The study of mob mentality is quite fascinating, and it is used to analyze situations which range from evacuations gone awry to the moment when demonstrations turn violent.

Link to **Top 10 Instances of Mob Mentality**:

<http://listverse.com/2013/07/28/top-10-instances-of-mob-mentality/>

Psychologists who study human behavior say that sensible, honest people may act in an uncharacteristic manner when they are part of a large group. This tendency to be influenced by others is called *mob behavior*. Experts say that people in a mob feel less individual responsibility for their actions and less worried about possible consequences. Also, noise and crowding may excite people and blur their judgment. In any case, people are more likely to act violently or even just unfairly in a group than on their own. This is especially true when they feel frightened or threatened in some way. They become followers and do what everyone else is doing.

**SCAPEGOATS:** A *scapegoat* is someone who has been singled out to blame for society’s problems. *Scapegoating* occurs when a person, or a group of people, are held responsible for problems that they have not caused. *Scapegoats* are frequently members of minority groups, because they have less power and are less able to defend themselves.

* a goat upon whose head are symbolically placed the sins of the people after which he is sent into the wilderness in the biblical ceremony for Yom Kippur
* one that bears the blame for others
* one that is the object of irrational hostility

**Origins of the term:**

In the Old Testament, a goat that was symbolically burdened with the [sins](http://www.merriam-webster.com/concise/sin) of the people and then killed on [Yom Kippur](http://www.merriam-webster.com/concise/Yom%20Kippur) to rid Jerusalem of its iniquities. Similar rituals were held elsewhere in the ancient world to transfer guilt or blame. In ancient Greece, human scapegoats were beaten and driven out of cities to mitigate calamities. In early Roman law, an innocent person was allowed to assume the penalty of another; [Christianity](http://www.merriam-webster.com/concise/Christianity) reflects this notion in its belief that [Jesus](http://www.merriam-webster.com/concise/Jesus) died to atone for the sins of mankind.

**SCAPEGOATING IN HISTORY:**

* In Ancient Greece, plagues, famines, and invasions were blamed on weak members of the society, like beggars or cripples, who were cast out of society immediately after a natural disaster.
* The Nazis blamed German Jews for Germany’s poor economy after WWI. Public opinion went against the Jews, contributing to a climate that could support the Holocaust.
* In the rural South during the Depression, white farmers blamed their economic woes on their black neighbors, fueling the rise of the Ku Klux Klan.

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**Questions for Discussion:**

1. Identify the scene in chapter 7 where the mob or herd mentality is demonstrated.
   1. Make a list of the phrases that indicate that the boys have been consumed by the passion of the mob.
   2. Which character’s participation in the circle surprised you? Why?
   3. How is the ominous ending of that mob scene an example of foreshadowing?
2. As you continue to read, identify the scapegoat(s) in *Lord of the Flies*? Why is this person the scapegoat?