

# *Lord of the Flies*

The book *Lord of the Flies* was written by the British author William Golding in 1954. The book is one of modern literature's most popular books.

A plane crashes in the sea during the Second World War and some survivors make it to a deserted island. They are all boys and they are all British in the ages between 6 and 12. They are all alone without any adults on the island. To set up some rules and make the whole thing work, they choose a leader. The leader is Ralph: A thin, light haired, confident twelve year old boy. Almost everyone is happy for it, except for Jack who is a skinny, red-haired boy with freckles and light blue eyes. He says that he should be the leader because he is the leader of the choir. Jack doesn't want to be under Ralph's leadership and he starts to lose sight of Ralph's democratic vision. Ralph wants to build shelters for the boys, collect food and keep a big fire going so they can be rescued. But Jack wants to hunt and have fun instead. He and some of the boys start to hunt after a beast they think is on the island and abandons all hope of being rescued. The little boys in the group are scared of nightmares and the fear and panic spreads to everyone in the group and while Ralph is trying to keep the group together Jack takes advantage of the situation and creates his own group. They hunt, war paint their faces and are barbaric and every boy on the island either gets killed or go from being with Ralph to being with Jack instead.

Finally the boys get rescued. When every boy on the island except for Ralph is with Jack they start to go after him, as they want to hunt him down. One night the hunting after Ralph is very brutal and all boys chase Ralph with weapons. Luckily Ralph makes his way to the beach where a soldier stands and is wondering what the boys are doing. Ralph starts to sob just like the other boys.

This book contains three important "themes" through the book: **the fire** which is going to save them, **the conch** that stands for democracy and respect **and the beast** that they are all afraid of but doesn't exist other than in their minds. When the conch breaks, the last hope of respect and democracy on the island goes away and dictatorship takes over.

\*THE END\*

- ***Some quotes that I think are pretty good are the following:***

"Maybe there is a beast....maybe it's only us." page 80

"Which is better - to be a pack of painted Indians like you are, or to be sensible like Ralph is...Which is better - to have laws and agree, or to hunt and kill?" page 164

I don't think that is a coincidence that this book was written just a few years after the Second World War. I think the author wanted to say and show us that it is very important that you have a good leader because without that we can fall into dictatorship even if there are people who want the opposite. Sure Ralph was a good leader, but in the end Jack was the leader and he was not good at all. I think since the boys were very young, they didn't even know what was best for them and that is probably the reason why you have to be 18 years old to vote in the elections too. Another meaning of the book may be that we all have a bit of evil in us – it maybe shows when we are in difficult situations and maybe people that seem to be kind and good can be driven into insanity if they are subjected to mental and psychological tests.

- A few other books that William Golding has written are

- *The Inheritors* (1955)
- *The Spire* (1964)
- *Darkness Visible* (1979)

The *Lord of the Flies* was written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time of history people made remarkable developments in their lives and their way to think. After the First World War people started to use words like “world war”, “genocide” and “nuclear war”.

People understood more about science and had better communications and faster transports and that changed the 20<sup>th</sup> century a lot which developed far more and way faster than any other century had ever developed before. For example, this century started with horses as their transport and within a few decades, people used cars instead. It was also in this century that the first man walked on the moon and not to forget, this was the century when millions of people were killed in wars.

This century sounds like a happy period where the people progressed along with technology, but since there were two big wars that shoveled millions of lives and the big depression was all over the world I think people still wanted to read books which made them feel happy. Perhaps books that were easy to read and not too philosophic. I think they also wanted to read books that took them away to a different world, or at least took them away from their reality – for example fantasy books.

Nowadays people want to read about vampires and magic (I’m thinking about the books about Edward Cullen and Harry Potter). But I also think that people want to read about people’s lives because reading blogs on the Internet has become very popular all over the world.

The books that Stieg Larsson has written have also become very popular all over Sweden at least but I think the books are popular in a lot of other countries as well. At least the movies which are based on his books are very popular in other countries than Sweden.

I think people want to read books, in which they can identify themselves with a character in the book, because then it is much more fun to read if you feel like you can relate. So even if a book is based on fantasy and the characters in the books are magicians etc, or if you read a book where there are only animals as characters, the author still makes the characters human so we can relate. One example of that is the story about the vampire Edward Cullen and the normal girl Bella Swan in the Twilight-books. We know, or at least are pretty certain, that vampires don’t exist, but still we can really relate to these books (and that is probably why they’ve had such great success) because the author has made the main character Edward, who is like I’ve said, a vampire, very human even though some people would say that vampires are beasts.