

Books by the Stack



Lord of the Flies by William Golding

The classic study of human nature which depicts the degeneration of a group of schoolboys marooned on a desert island.

Why you'll like it: *Crossover age appeal, sympathetic, fast-paced, bleak, spare.*

About the Author: William Golding was born in Cornwall, England on September 19, 1911. At Oxford University, he studied natural science for two years and then transferred to a program for English literature and philosophy. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, was published in 1954 and was made into a film in 1963. Golding won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983. He also wrote plays, essays, and short stories. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1988. He died on June 19, 1993. (Bowker Author Biography)

Questions for Discussion

1. Is *Lord of the Flies* an adventure novel? A parable? A historical novel of Cold War Europe?
2. Why do the boys react to their island surroundings by stripping off their clothes? What might their actions symbolize?
3. How do the boys try to establish order on the island? What is the effect on the boys' behavior?
4. Ralph and Jack compete from the beginning, each exhibiting different leadership qualities. Which boy makes the best leader and why? What gives him power?
5. What order of business is most significant to Ralph? What is most important to Jack? What does Piggy believe to be most pressing?
6. Piggy's glasses are used to start the fire. What might be their symbolic significance? How does the significance of the glasses change or deepen after Jack breaks them (p.71)?
7. What scene was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?
8. Titles can tell you what to pay attention to; set the tone of the story; titles can be mysterious until after you have finished the story, when their meaning becomes clear. What is Golding trying to do with the chapter titles?
9. Only one female voice is presented (very briefly) in this novel, that of Piggy's aunt. Would this story have been different in any important ways if there had been both boys and girls on the island?
10. What role does fear play in *Lord of the Flies*? How does fear affect the boys as the story progresses?

11. What is ironic about the naval officer who arrives to “rescue” the boys/ How does Ralph feel about returning to the safety of civilization? Why does he weep – is it relief, or something else?

12. *Lord of the Flies* was published in 1954, although it is set in some fictional future. In what ways does its message seem to speak of the violence present in 1954? What about violence today?

(Questions provided by publisher, litlovers.com, and shmoop.com)



www.grpl.org/BookClub