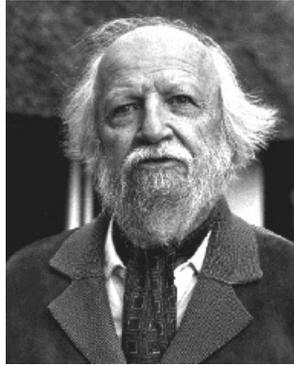


LORD OF THE FLIES

by William Golding



THE AUTHOR

William Golding (1911-1993) was born in Cornwall, England, the son of a schoolteacher and a suffragette. Despite an early interest in writing, he followed his parents' advice and studied the natural sciences, continuing until his second year at Oxford, after which he switched to a concentration in English Literature. After working briefly in the theater, he followed his father into the field of education. When World War II started, he entered the Royal Navy, serving on many combat missions, including the Normandy invasion. The horrors he saw in the war influenced the rest of his career, as he became convinced that the evils of war grew, not from outward circumstances, but from something within the nature of man himself.

After the war he returned to teaching, meanwhile pursuing his dream of becoming a writer. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, was printed in 1954 after being rejected by more than twenty publishers. The success of the book enabled Golding to turn to writing full-time in 1960, a vocation he pursued for the rest of his life, but though his later works were highly respected, he never again achieved the level of popularity and recognition gained as a result of his first novel. Later works included more than ten novels, among them *Pincher Martin* (1956) and *Rites of Passage* (1980), and a play, *The Brass Butterfly* (1958). He won the Booker Prize in 1980, the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983, and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1988.

Lord of the Flies is on its surface a simple story, but the depth of its characterizations and the extent to which it deals with the most pressing problems of man and civilization have opened the story up to a wide variety of interpretations. Golding said it was intended to be a response to R.M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean*, in which three British boys (two named Ralph and Jack) are marooned on an island and survive and triumph by their wits. Some critics see in Golding's masterpiece an affirmation of the theological doctrines of original sin and total depravity, while others argue for a portrayal of the Freudian concepts of the id, ego, and superego. Some see a deep-seated criticism of Western civilization and the attitudes that led it to the brink of self-destruction, while others see a repudiation of Rousseau's concept of the noble savage. In other words, the story provides such rich soil that it tends to grow whatever plants the critic sows there, so that often the interpretation given to the novel tells more about the critic and his mindset than it does about Golding's intentions.

PLOT SUMMARY

The story begins on a deserted island where a group of children have bailed out of a plane during a storm. Ralph and Piggy are searching for other survivors, and in the process discover a conch shell. When Ralph blows it, other children emerge from various places on the island, including a boys' choir led by a self-confident boy named Jack Merridew. It appears that few of the boys know one another, and in conversation we find that an atomic bomb has recently fallen, decreasing the likelihood of rescue. Jack is a natural leader and attempts to assume authority over the group, but others suggest a vote, and Ralph is elected chief, largely because he possesses the conch. Jack and his boys are then designated as the hunters of the group. Ralph, Jack, and a quiet boy named Simon go on an expedition to determine if the land they are on is really an island, and they discover that it is, then return to the beach where the other boys are gathered. They now know that there are no adults on the island and they are on their own.

The boys then make basic rules for themselves, the first being that whoever holds the conch has the floor to speak in their meetings. The youngest boys tell of their fears of a snakelike "beastie" on the island, though the older boys insist that no such creature exists. They then decide to make a fire to send up a smoke signal to attract potential rescuers. They go to the top of the mountain in the center of the island, gather firewood, and use Piggy's glasses to light the fire. The wood is rotten, however, and the fire quickly spreads, burning part of the mountainside. They later discover that one of the smaller children has disappeared, and they fear he was killed in the fire. The boys constantly have trouble keeping order in their meetings because some insist on interrupting and speaking without the conch, Jack being the chief offender.

The next task is to build huts for shelter. Ralph takes charge of the hut-building detail despite having no idea how to make one, while Jack and his hunters are given the responsibility of keeping the fire going. After some initial enthusiasm, most of the boys run off to play instead of building huts, and Ralph and Simon are left to build on their own. Meanwhile, some of the choirboys begin to realize that no adults are present to make them behave, and they start to torment the younger boys, even though their consciences bother them when they do it. Naturally enough, the little ones then start to torment one another. After two failed attempts to kill a pig, Jack decides that his boys need camouflage, so they paint their faces with different-colored clays. One day Ralph spots a ship in the distance, then suddenly realizes that their fire has gone out. He rushes to the top of the mountain to relight it, but arrives too late - the ship has passed over the horizon. Furious, he finds Jack and his boys and discovers that they have been pig-hunting, and this time were successful. Jack is proud of their accomplishment, but Ralph alone realizes that maintaining the fire is more important than providing meat, though the boys enjoy the feast. In the process of relighting the fire, Piggy's glasses are broken, leaving only one lens intact. The hunters are also showing increasing signs of blood-lust, led, of course, by Jack himself.

Ralph then calls another meeting, this time for the purpose of chastising the boys for ignoring the rules, especially the one about keeping the fire going. The little ones again bring up the subject of the Beast, but the threat of such a creature seems much more ominous at night than it had during the day. The previous night one of the boys had seen Simon creeping around in the dark and had mistaken him for the Beast. When questioned, Simon admitted that he had found a hiding place on the mountain and had gone there to be by himself. The children now claim that, because the hunters have never seen a Beast on the island, it must have come out of the sea. As the meeting disintegrates into chaos and Jack leads his choirboys down the beach for a screaming

revel, Ralph and Piggy talk about the wisdom of blowing the conch to regather the group. Ralph realizes that, if he blows it and the boys don't come, his authority is finished and all order on the island will be gone. Piggy then expresses his fear that, should Jack then become chief by sheer force of his personality, he would hurt Piggy as a way of showing his power over Ralph.

That night, an airplane is shot down over the sea. The pilot parachutes out of the plane and lands on the top of the mountain, but in the process breaks his neck and is left in such a posture that, when the wind blows, the parachute moves enough to make the corpse sit up and lie down again. When Sam and Eric, twins who are on fire duty, awake from their sleep, they hear a strange noise and see the moving figure in the dimness of the early dawn. They think they have seen the Beast, and rush down the mountain to tell the others. All are now afraid to climb the mountain, but decide that the Beast must have its lair on a plateau at the end of the island that had not yet been explored. The biggest boys climb the plateau and find nothing, after which the others go up there to frolic. Ralph then insists that the fire must be tended, no matter what the danger.

As the boys search for the Beast, Ralph begins to contemplate the filthy and unkempt nature of the group, including himself, and longs for a hot bath and a haircut. He looks out to sea and wonders if they will ever be rescued. Simon encourages him in his reverie with the belief that rescue will come, but Ralph isn't so sure. The hunters are, as usual, distracted by the chance to kill a pig, and go off on the track of one. Suddenly a boar crashes through the underbrush and Ralph throws his spear, hitting the monster in the snout, but it gets away. When the other boys arrive, they mock the hunt with one of the boys playing the role of the boar; the game gets too intense, however, and the boy is mildly injured in the process. This is not a good sign of things to come. They finally get up enough courage to climb the mountain, but the sun is setting. Simon volunteers to cross the island alone to inform Piggy and the younger children that they won't be back until after dark, while Ralph and Jack lead the others upward. The two of them, accompanied by Roger, ascend toward the summit. They creep silently forward, see the dead pilot and his parachute silhouetted against the night sky, and run down the mountain in terror.

Jack calls for an assembly and tries to get the others to oust Ralph as chief. He gets no support and runs off in anger, inviting any who care to do so to accompany him. Simon suggests climbing the mountain, but Ralph refuses because of the Beast. Piggy then proposes that they light a fire on the beach instead, and all agree. By the time the fire is built, Ralph and Piggy realize that a number of the bigger boys have run away, presumably to join Jack further down the beach, while Simon has gone up the mountain on his own. Jack gathers his followers around him and announces that he is now the chief of the tribe of hunters; they will spend their time hunting, and leave meat for the Beast so that it will leave them alone. He also plans to stage a feast to lure more of the boys away from Ralph. They move silently through the forest and find the herd of pigs, pursuing and finally killing a large sow. Jack cuts off the head and mounts it on a stick as a gift for the Beast, then orders the others to take the remaining meat back to the beach. There they will invite the other boys to a feast, though they will have to steal fire from them to prepare it. Simon, meanwhile, is hiding near where the ghastly head is mounted. He stares at it, watching the swarms of flies that gather around. He imagines that the pig head, the Lord of the Flies, is talking to him, telling him that it is the Beast, the evil within them all, and that Simon will be killed by the other boys. At that point Simon has a seizure and passes out.

When he awakes, he continues up the mountain and discovers what the so-called Beast really is, then heads down the mountain to tell the others. Meanwhile, all the boys except for Ralph and Piggy have gone to Jack's feast; finally, the two decide to join them to see what is going

on. They find Jack enthroned like an idol in the midst of his worshipers. He asks who is going to join his tribe, and when Ralph tries to assert his authority as chief and speak of the conch, Jack denies the importance of both. As thunder crackles overhead, Ralph reminds them that shelter can only be found at the encampment, but the boys are too taken up in the moment to care. They begin to dance a wild, savage dance, chanting death to the Beast. Suddenly Simon appears and tries to shout over the din to tell them about the dead pilot on the mountain. In the excitement and fear of the mob, they fall upon Simon and kill him. As the storm continues, the parachute lifts the dead pilot off the mountaintop and carries him out to sea. Soon the tide comes in and carries Simon's body out to sea as well.

The next morning, Ralph and Piggy are feeling terribly guilty for having participated in the dance the night before, though they were not involved directly in the murder of Simon. Sam and Eric feel guilty as well - none of the four boys is willing to admit to the others that he was involved in the dance. Jack had now moved his tribe to Castle Rock at the end of the island. He had set a watch, booby-trapped the entrance with a large rock that would fall on any unwanted visitor, and was exacting harsh discipline, having tied up one of the boys for hours, threatening to beat him for some unknown infraction. Jack is continuing to generate fear in the boys by warning them that the Beast will come upon them if they are not very watchful. When they protest that they killed the Beast the night before, he insists that the Beast can never be killed, even if he comes in disguise as he did the previous night. He tells them that they will soon steal fire from the encampment again and have another feast, but instead of stealing fire, Jack and two of his boys raid the encampment in the middle of the night and steal Piggy's glasses.

In the morning, Ralph, Piggy, and the twins go to Castle Rock to try to retrieve Piggy's glasses, since he can't see at all without them. When they get there, the entrance is guarded by painted tribesmen, and Roger is high on the cliff with his hand on the lever that will send a huge rock hurtling down onto the neck of land leading to the plateau. Ralph blows the conch and tries to call an assembly, but gets no response. Jack then arrives with some hunters with a pig they have just killed. He challenges Ralph, and the two begin to fight, using their spears as quarterstaves. At a break in the fighting, Jack orders his boys to tie up the twins, and prepares to attack for real. Roger puts his weight on the lever and the rock crashes from the cliff, splintering the conch into a thousand fragments and crushing Piggy and sending his body hurtling into the sea. The tribesmen then begin to throw their spears at Ralph, and he is wounded as he desperately runs away. After he flees into the forest, Jack tells the twins that they must join his tribe - or else.

Ralph considers trying to reason with the tribe in daylight, but decides that the paint shields them from any remnants of civilization. He climbs to the mounted pig's head, smashes it, and takes the stick as a weapon. He then creeps toward Castle Rock and waits for the twins to appear on guard duty. He climbs up to speak to them and try to get them to come with him. They refuse out of fear - Roger had done horrible things to them to force them to join the tribe. They give Ralph a little meat and warn him that Jack and Roger are planning to lead the tribe on a hunt for him the next day. Worst of all, Roger has sharpened a stick at both ends - the same implement they had used to mount the pig's head as an offering for the Beast. When the hunt begins, Ralph hides in a nearby thicket, but the twins, after being hurt by Roger again, reveal his whereabouts. The tribesmen send more rocks crashing into the impenetrable thicket, then set it on fire to force Ralph into the open. He bursts out and breaks through their line, running across the island and finally hiding near the clearing where the pig head had been mounted. A tribesman discovers him, and he charges out of his hiding place and runs for the beach, with hunters screaming and

throwing their spears as he flees. The fire is in the process of consuming the island, and the boys are fleeing the fire as much as they are pursuing Ralph. When he reaches the beach, he stumbles and falls, then drags himself upward, preparing to plead for mercy.

Instead, he sees standing above him a man in uniform; a cruiser had spotted the smoke from the burning island and had come to rescue the boys. He thinks at first that they have just been playing at war, but when Ralph tells him that two boys are dead, he realizes the seriousness of what he is witnessing. He mumbles something about expecting better of British boys, then prepares to return to his cutter.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Ralph - The boy who finds the conch, he is elected chief by the other boys, but soon his leadership and even his life are threatened by Jack and his tribe of savages.
- Jack - The head boy of a boys' choir, he is a natural leader, but is violent and will submit to no authority. He leads most of the boys into savagery, and is indirectly responsible for the deaths of Simon and Piggy.
- Piggy - A fat, asthmatic, intellectual boy who wears glasses and is mocked by the other boys, he is befriended by Ralph and ultimately murdered by Jack's tribe in a brutal attack.
- Simon - A quiet boy who is subject to seizures, he discovers the true nature of the Beast and is murdered by Jack's tribe while they are in a frenzy after the feast on the beach.
- Sam and Eric - A pair of twins whom no one can tell apart, they are the first to discover the dead pilot on top of the mountain. They are the only big boys who remain with Ralph and Piggy after Simon's murder, but even they defect under coercion at the end.
- Roger - The most violent of Jack's tribesmen, he pushes the rock off the cliff that crushes and kills Piggy.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Here at last was the imagined but never fully realized place leaping into real life.” (ch.1, p.12)

“He snatched his knife out of the sheath and slammed it into a tree trunk. Next time there would be no mercy.” (ch.1, p.27)

“At the return Ralph found himself alone on a limb with Jack and they grinned at each other, sharing this burden. Once more, amid the breeze, the shouting, the slanting sunlight on the high mountain, was shed that glamour, that strange invisible light of friendship, adventure, and content.” (ch.2, p.35)

“I agree with Ralph. We’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages. We’re English, and the English are best at everything. So we’ve got to do the right things.” (Jack, ch.2, p.38)

“He tried to convey the compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up.” (ch.3, p.46)

“They walked along, two continents of expedience and feeling, unable to communicate.” (ch.3, p.49)

“In his other life Maurice had received chastisement for filling a younger eye with sand. Now, though there was no parent to let fall a heavy hand, Maurice still felt the unease of wrongdoing. At the back of his mind formed the uncertain outlines of an excuse.” (ch.4, p.55)

“Here, invisible yet strong, was the taboo of the old life. Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger’s arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins.” (ch.4, p.57)

“Beside the pool his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them. He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling. He capered toward Bill, and the mask was a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.” (ch.4, p.58)

“His mind was crowded with memories; memories of the knowledge that had come to them when they closed in on the struggling pig, knowledge that they had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will on it, taken away its life like a long and satisfying drink.” (ch.4, p.64)

“Life is scientific, that’s what it is. In a year or two when the war’s over they’ll be traveling to Mars and back. I know there isn’t no beast - not with claws and all that, I mean - but I know there isn’t no fear, either.” (Piggy, ch.5, p.77)

“Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind’s essential illness.” (ch.5, p.82)

“The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away.” (ch.5, p.84)

“Because the rules are the only thing we’ve got!” (Ralph, ch.5, p.84)

“If I blow the conch and they don’t come back, then we’ve had it. We shan’t keep the fire going. We’ll be like animals. We’ll never be rescued.” (Ralph, ch.5, p.85)

“I been in bed so much I done some thinking. I know about people. I know about me. And him. He can’t hurt you: but if you stand out of the way he’d hurt the next thing. And that’s me.” (Piggy, ch.5, p.86)

“A stain in the darkness, a stain that was Jack, detached itself and began to draw away.” (ch.7, p.112)

“Then Jack found the throat and the hot blood spouted over his hands. The sow collapsed under them and they were heavy and fulfilled upon her.” (ch.8, p.125)

“In front of Simon, the Lord of the Flies hung on his stick and grinned.” (ch.8, p.128)

“Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill. You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you? Close, close, close! I’m the reason why it’s no go? Why things are what they are?” (Lord of the Flies, ch.8, p.133)

“The beast was harmless and horrible; and the news must reach the others as soon as possible.” (Simon, ch.9, p.136)

“Before the party had started a great log had been dragged into the center of the lawn and Jack, painted and garlanded, sat there like an idol.” (ch.9, p.137)

“Power lay in the brown swell of his forearms: authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape.” (ch.9, p.138)

“I don’t ask you to be a sport, I’ll say, not because you’re strong, but because what’s right’s right. Give me my glasses, I’m going to say - you have to!” (Piggy, ch.11, p.158)

“Piggy’s arms and legs twitched a bit, like a pig’s after it has been killed.” (ch.11, p.167)

“A semicircle of little boys, their bodies streaked with colored clay, sharp sticks in their hands, were standing on the beach making no noise at all.” (ch.12, p.185)

“And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy.” (ch.12, p.186-187)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Evaluate William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* as a symbolic portrayal of the biblical teachings of original sin and total depravity. Pay special attention to its relationship to Paul’s treatment of the subject in Romans 1-5. May the book rightly be considered a Christian allegory? Why or why not?
2. William Golding once stated that the plot development in *Lord of the Flies* is inevitable “because the boys are suffering from the terrible disease of being human.” What does he mean by this, and what does it suggest about his view of human nature? Be sure to assess your conclusions about Golding’s ideas from the standpoint of Scripture.

3. To what extent is William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* intended to portray a contrast between reason and emotion? Which characters most display these contrasting characteristics? Which does Golding consider more valuable? Which is more dangerous? Would Golding be more at home in the Enlightenment or the Romantic era, or would he argue that each has its dangers?
4. Most critics of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* speak very highly of Piggy, the exemplar of the scientific rationalist, but Golding himself did not share their opinion. He once wrote, "Piggy isn't wise He's naive, short-sighted, and rationalist, like most scientists. . . . Piggy understands society less than almost anyone there at all." Therefore the reader must realize that Piggy's myopia, his blindness without his glasses, is no accident. Given this insight from the author himself, use details from the novel to assess his view of science and its role in society.
5. To what extent may William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* be seen as portraying a contrast between democracy and totalitarianism? Given the fact that the novel was written in the early years of the Cold War, connect the story to the political realities of the Fifties. Be sure to cite specifics from the novel to support your ideas.
6. Compare and contrast William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and George Orwell's *1984* as cautionary tales about the dangers of totalitarianism. How is the society of Jack's hunters like that of Big Brother, and in what important ways are the two different? Which novel gives more hope for the future of mankind? Why do you think so?
7. Some critics have argued that William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is a picture of the failure of Western civilization located on the microcosm of a tropical island. Remembering that the author fought in and was horrified by the evils of World War II, cite evidence to support this interpretation.
8. In chapter 2 of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Jack says, "We're English, and the English are best at everything." To what extent is the novel a satire of British imperial pretensions? Use specific incidents and quotations to support your answer.
9. Compare and contrast William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* as critiques of British imperialism. Which novel is more effective in its criticism? Why? Support your assessment with specifics from both stories.
10. Some critics have argued that William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* may be interpreted in the context of a Freudian view of human nature, identifying Jack with the id, Ralph with the ego, and Piggy with the superego. Assess this interpretation. To what extent does it fit the novel? In what ways is it forced? Be sure to cite specifics in giving your answer.

11. The writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau have influenced many works of literature over the last two hundred years, particularly his view of man in the state of nature. Use William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* to comment on Rousseau's understanding of man and society. Is man a "noble savage" who is corrupted by society, or is society a civilizing influence needed to control the underlying savagery of man?
12. Compare and contrast William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* with regard to their views of man in the state of nature. What do the two authors believe causes the corruption in man? Which view is more biblical? Be sure to cite specifics from both novels and from Scripture in answering the question.
13. Compare and contrast William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. What do these "people stranded on a deserted island" stories have in common? Consider major themes along with views of man and society in answering the question.
14. Unlike the situation in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, where the children are stranded on a desert island with no resources other than those to be found on the island itself, the protagonist in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is well-supplied from the shipwreck that strands him on the island. How do the two authors use these different conditions to contribute to their respective central ideas, such as human depravity and divine providence?
15. Unlike the situation in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, where the children are stranded on a desert island with no resources other than those to be found on the island itself, the protagonist in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is well-supplied from the shipwreck that strands him on the island. How would Defoe's story have been different had Crusoe had no resources like the children in Golding's novel? Would this have altered the fundamental themes of the story? Why or why not?
16. Compare and contrast the criticisms of Western civilization found in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Be sure to cite both specific incidents and quotations from both works of literature.
17. Compare and contrast the views of the nature of man found in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Be sure to cite both specific incidents and quotations from both works of literature.
18. In what sense does Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* present to the reader an adult version of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*?
19. Discuss the significance of the title of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. What does the pig head mounted on a stick represent, and how does it relate to the biblical allusion behind it? Be sure to connect your discussion to the major themes of the novel.

20. Discuss the use of biblical imagery in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Choose three biblical images used in the novel other than the titular figure. What do these images communicate? Does the author use them in the same way Scripture uses them? Why or why not?
21. In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, what is the significance of the fact that the story takes place in the context of a nuclear war? How does this information, alluded to only infrequently in the story, contribute to the themes and message of the novel?
22. Discuss the role of adults, both through their presence and absence, in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. What are adults intended to represent in the story? How do they contribute to its overall message? Consider the absence of adults for the bulk of the story, the role of the dead pilot, and the officer who appears at the end.
23. Discuss the use of foreshadowing in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Choose three specific examples of this literary technique and consider why the author chooses to point toward later plot elements in the way he does. What are the benefits of these instances of foreshadowing? What are their drawbacks?
24. Consider the initial appearances of the three main characters in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Discuss in detail how the author's approach to shaping the characters of Ralph, Piggy, and Jack when the reader first meets them creates a basic understanding of who they are and what roles they will play in the story. Include word choice and dialogue as well as description in your discussion.
25. Which character in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* undergoes the greatest change in the course of the novel? What is the nature of the change, and how does this change contribute to the major themes of the novel?
26. Choose a secondary character in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* such as Simon or Roger and discuss how this character contributes to the overall message of the story. Be sure to cite specifics and use quotations to support your conclusions.
27. In chapter five of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the author tells us that "Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind's essential illness." What, according to Golding, is that essential illness? How does the novel express Golding's belief concerning the fundamental plight of humanity? In what ways does the character of Simon play a key role in giving insight into this "essential illness"?
28. The character of Simon plays a unique role in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. How is he different from the other boys? Consider especially his role in interpreting the moral universe of the island and his interactions with the Beast and the Lord of the Flies. Does Golding suggest through the character of Simon that a few people exist in the world who possess innate moral goodness? Why or why not?

29. Consider the unique role of Simon in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. May he be viewed as a Christ-figure? Why or why not? Be sure to use specific incidents and quotations from the novel to support your conclusions.
30. Discuss the trappings of savagery practiced by Jack's tribe in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. How do the war paint, the pig hunts, and the dances portray essential themes of the novel? In what ways do these practices conceal, and in what ways do they reveal, the true natures of the characters who practice them?
31. In chapter five of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph says, "the rules are the only thing we've got!" What does this assertion communicate about Golding's views of human nature and human society? What are the purposes of things like law and civilization? How does the experience of the boys on the island illustrate both the necessity for and the limitations of the rule of law?
32. Consider the contrasting views of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes concerning the need for and the nature of human government. With which of these views would William Golding more readily agree? Use details from *Lord of the Flies* to answer the question, being sure to explain the basics of the views held by Locke and Hobbes in the process.
33. What does William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* suggest about the true nature of games, especially those played by little boys? Do such games reveal deeper truths about the natures of those who play them? May the same be said about modern versions of war games and "Cowboys and Indians" such as those played on computers and video game machines?
34. Why do you think William Golding chose a group of schoolboys to convey his message in *Lord of the Flies*? Would the story have been different if the stranded children had been a group of girls? Why or why not? Would the answer have been different when the story was written more than fifty years ago than it would be now?
35. Why do you think William Golding chose a group of pre-adolescent schoolboys to convey his message in *Lord of the Flies*? Would the story have been different if those stranded had been high school boys? Why or why not? In what ways did the choice of middle-school and elementary boys fit the major themes Golding was trying to develop?
36. In chapter five of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* Piggy says, "Life is scientific, that's what it is. In a year or two when the war's over they'll be traveling to Mars and back. I know there isn't no beast - not with claws and all that, I mean - but I know there isn't no fear, either." Consider the worldview being expressed by Piggy in this quotation. Does the author agree with the words he puts in Piggy's mouth? Do you? Assess the quotation, both from the standpoint of the author's message and that of Scripture.
37. Discuss the symbolism of fire in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. The image is used in a variety of ways. Choose three of them and discuss how the uses of the image contribute to the overall themes and message of the novel.

38. To what extent is William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* an antiwar novel? Support your conclusion with specific incidents and quotations from the story.
39. C.S. Lewis argued that all of human literature is the retelling of one story - that of innocence, fall, and redemption. To what extent is this true of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*? Is the author's treatment of these biblical themes in accordance with Scripture? Why or why not?
40. To what extent may the island in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* be thought to represent the Garden of Eden, with the decline of the boys into savagery representing the Fall of Man? Does the author picture them as descending from Paradise into Hell? Discuss the parallels that exist between the two stories as well as the ways in which Golding's novel does not fit the biblical prototype.
41. Discuss the extent to which Ralph and Jack are foils in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Why is each character necessary in order for the other character to be fully understood? Be sure to use specifics in answering the question.
42. Discuss the significance of the Beast in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Is it a symbol of primal fear, superstition, religion, or something else? Consider the attitude toward the Beast of the younger boys and the older ones as well as the way the Beast becomes a tool of manipulation in the hands of Jack.
43. In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the conflict between good and evil is often couched in terms of order versus chaos or civilization versus anarchy. Should we then conclude that Golding believes that civilization and order are by their very nature good? Why or why not? Use specifics from the novel to support your conclusions.
44. Some critics have suggested that William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is an allegory. One of the problems with an allegory is that the characters are rarely well-rounded, but simply serve as symbols of some universal trait. Is this true of Golding's most famous novel? Who, in your opinion, is the most fully-drawn and complex character in the novel? Why do you think so? Be sure to cite specifics to support your argument.
45. Consider the symbolism of the conch shell in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. What does it represent? Be sure to include in your answer a discussion of how the role of the conch changes throughout the novel.
46. In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the conch and the Lord of the Flies are contrasting symbols. Discuss the ways in which this is so, from the roles they play in the fledgling society formed by the boys to the manner and circumstances of their destruction. How do these contrasts contribute to the central themes of the novel?

47. Karl Marx argued that religion was the opiate of the masses, a mere construct developed by those in power to manipulate and subjugate those under them. To what extent does William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* support Marx's assessment of religion? Give special attention to the developing role of the Beast as the story progresses.
48. What is a *deus ex machina*? Look up the term and consider how it applies to the ending of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Does such a seemingly-contrived ending spoil the story or enhance its significance? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with specifics from the novel, being sure to relate the ending to its major themes.
49. Would you consider William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* to be an optimistic or pessimistic novel? Does he leave the reader with hope or despair with regard to man and society? Consider both the major themes and the ending in your answer.
50. Discuss the importance of the "littluns" in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Though few are given names and they rarely act independently, they nonetheless serve a purpose in developing the themes of the novel. What might that purpose be? Be sure to use specifics to support your answer.
51. If the boys marooned on the desert island in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* are intended to be a microcosm of human society, what does Golding believe are the chief characteristics of society? Be sure to include the behavior of the littluns as well as the older boys in your analysis.
52. What does William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* have to say about the nature of good human leadership? Discuss the characters of Ralph and Jack in terms of what they have to say about what makes an effective, as opposed to a destructive, leader.
53. Choose a relationship from William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and discuss its significance, especially in terms of how it changes and how it contributes to the themes of the novel. You may discuss one of the following relationships: Ralph and Piggy, Jack and Roger, Ralph and Jack, Jack and Piggy, Ralph and Simon.
54. Choose a surviving character from William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and project forty years into the future after the end of the story. You may choose a main character like Ralph or Jack, or focus on one of the littluns. How would he assess his memories of the experience on the island? Write the essay in the first person, and be sure you evaluate rather than simply recounting the narrative.
55. In the 1963 movie version of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, director Peter Brook chose to have the choirboys under Jack's leadership singing a song called *Kyrie Eleison* as they marched down the beach, and later off to hunt. Why was this a good choice on the part of the director? Look up the lyrics (and their English translation) and discuss how the anthem fits the major themes of the novel.

56. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt sought to encourage Americans in the depth of the Depression during his first inaugural address in 1932, he said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Discuss William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* in the light of Roosevelt’s famous dictum. Would Golding agree with Roosevelt? Why or why not? Support your conclusions with details from the novel.
57. Discuss the use of animal imagery in William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*. Be sure to go beyond the obvious examples of the Beast and the Lord of the Flies and look at similes and metaphors used to describe the children and their behavior as the novel progresses. What does this imagery contribute to the major themes of the novel?
58. The original title of William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* was *Strangers from Within*. Why would this be an appropriate title for the novel? Which title do you think better communicates the central ideas Golding was trying to convey? Use specifics from the novel to support your conclusion.
59. In reflecting on World War II, William Golding said, “I remember saying to myself, ‘I have a Nazi inside me.’ If I’d been fighting over there, I’d have been a Nazi.” How is this insight gained from the war reflected in *Lord of the Flies*? Give particular attention to the roles played by authority and mass hysteria in the novel, and the consequences of the treatment of these ideas for an understanding of the author’s view of human nature.
60. After reading stories to his children about young people abandoned on a deserted island, William Golding wondered out loud to his wife, “Wouldn’t it be a good idea to write a book about what would really happen to children on an island?” The result was *Lord of the Flies*. How does the novel serve as a needed corrective to the saccharine unreality of the genre of children’s literature against which he was rebelling? Cite specifics from the novel to support your conclusions.
61. William Golding once said, “It’s possible to make people more aware of themselves through stories.” To what extent has he succeeded in doing just that in his most famous novel, *Lord of the Flies*? How does the novel promote self-awareness, and how does this in turn give the novel its power and help to explain its enduring popularity? Be sure to use specific characters, incidents, and quotations from the novel to support your conclusions.
62. Critic C.B. Cox once argued that the power of William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* “derives from Golding’s faith that every detail of human life has a religious significance.” Do you agree or disagree? Write an essay either supporting or refuting Cox’s assertion. Be sure to use details and quotations from the novel to support your conclusion.
63. Consider the issue of personal responsibility as it is portrayed in William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*. To what extent may one conclude that the willingness to accept responsibility for one’s actions is the hallmark of civilized, moral behavior? Support your answer with details and quotations from the novel.

64. Cartoonist Walt Kelly, the creator of the comic strip *Pogo*, once placed in the mouth of the titular character the famous malapropism, “We have met the enemy, and they are us.” Would William Golding, author of *Lord of the Flies*, agreed with Pogo’s sentiment? Why or why not? Use details and quotations from the book to support your conclusion.

65. Both John Knowles’ *A Separate Peace* and William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* portray a group of adolescent boys in an isolated environment. Such settings bring to the fore the conflict between order and chaos. Discuss these themes as they are treated in the two novels. What do the developments of the ideas of order and chaos say about the authors’ beliefs concerning human nature? Evaluate the approaches taken by Knowles and Golding in the context of Scripture.