



## [Lord of the Flies](#), by William Golding

### **In A Nutshell**

*Lord of the Flies* was first published in 1954 by William Golding, an English writer. It took awhile to gain wide readership, but by the 1960s it was a big success and Golding was off on his writing career that would include a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983. According to the prize committee, Golding's novels "illuminate the human condition of the world today." Not bad.

This particular novel is about what happens when a bunch of young boys are stranded on an island and left to fend for themselves. *Lord of the Flies* is an allegory (essentially a story with a moral), about...well, it's about something. People can't seem to decide exactly what. It's either about the inherent evil of man, or psychological struggle, or religion, or human nature, or the author's feelings on war (he was in the Navy during WWII), or possibly all of the above.

The whole boys-being-stuck-on-an-island thing is nothing new, and it seems Golding used this scenario to respond to another novel, *The Coral Island*, written by R.M. Ballantyne in 1857. *The Coral Island* depicts some white, European boys who end up on an island and use Christianity to "conquer" the "heathen ways" of the Polynesian natives. Naturally, this was a huge success in Victorian England. Golding read it and got all fired up, and wrote *Lord of the Flies* using many of the same names for his characters that Ballantyne did. Unlike *The Coral Island*, *Lord of the Flies* shows the British boys as savage and, to use a technical term, rather "sketch."

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## Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 Why does Golding end *Lord of the Flies* with the rescue of the boys? Does this ending change the realistic nature of the novel?
- 2 Check out the scene where we meet all the boys in Chapter One. How do the various introductions of each character set-up the story that follows? Are there any big surprises?
- 3 Do the chapter titles do anything for you?

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