

# Lord of the flies - what happens to ruin ralph and jack's friendship?

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



At the start of the novel we are told: Ralph and Jack smiled at each other with shy liking. Yet by the end, they are mortal enemies. What happens to ruin their friendship? In order to be able to understand how Jack's and Ralph's enmity grew over time we must first understand what kind of character these two individuals are. In his novel " Lord of the Flies" William Golding uses a group of boys, stranded on a deserted island, to show the malicious nature of mankind. The two main characters are Jack and Ralph. Jack is the leader of a group of choirboys. He is first described with an ugly sense of cruelty and arrogance which makes him instantly unpleasant. During the first assembly, he rejects Piggy " Shut up, Fatty" (P. 17). He has no respect for Piggy, or anyone else. His first ambition is to become chief. He says on page eighteen with " simple arrogance", " I ought to be chief." Jack believes that there is no better leader than him and that no one else has the right to control him, but he should command everyone. This is because he sees himself as a natural leader, and he has never been in a position without control. However, when the boys on the island say they want to vote on a chief, Jack " started to protest" (P. 18). This is because Jack knows that he is not in control of the boys who are not in the choir, which is the majority, and therefore he would not receive their vote. As expected Jack is defeated by Ralph, the other main character. Ralph is the complete opposite of Jack. He is instantly amiable, as he is introduced as a much fairer person. He seems to be self-confident rather than arrogant, giving the impression that he does not fear the deserted island they are trapped on. This fact is probably the reason why the boys vote him as chief in preference to Jack. In addition he demonstrates a far more pleasant attitude, for example towards Piggy, he

interacts with him as opposed to Jack's ignorant assault. I think there is an instant, concealed aversion between them but for different reasons. Jack does not like Ralph because he is voted chief in his place and he is simply disgusted that he should obey someone else's order, now that there are no grown-ups around. Ralph on the other hand seems to respect Jack, he even allows him to persist in leading the choir and lets him decide on their responsibilities. Yet, throughout the book this buried aversion grows and becomes more and more intense. Their different aims, Ralph's being the survival and rescue, Jack's being immediate satisfaction (e. g. by hunting and playing), also causes tension. Different scenes in the book help build this tension between them, for example when Jack neglects his duty of preserving the fire in order to go hunting. When the fire has gone out a boat passes the island, yet because the fire has extinguished it does not notice the stranded boys (Chapter 3). More struggles arouse because of Jack's continuous and increasing challenges against Ralph's authority. He does not take Ralph serious as a superior and therefore, he loses his fear of being punished for improper actions and behaviours by an adult or, in his opinion, significant authority. This freedom coupled with his malicious and arrogant personality leads to a deterioration into an evil character. In contrast Ralph begins to long and daydream of his civilised and normal past. Gradually, he becomes confused and begins to lose clarity in his everyday thoughts and speeches: " Ralph was puzzled by the shutter that flickered in his brain. There was something he wanted to say; then the shutter had come down." (P. 156) Eventually Jack can persuade the boys to put their confidence in his leadership. He does so by keeping the tribe together and controlling them.

Ralph on the other hand spends time trying to persuade the boys with common sense and does not realise that they can be persuaded easier with bribes and the temptation of fun. Ralph tried to establish a democracy, where everyone has the right to speak, but he is beaten by Jack who operates a deceiving dictatorship and gives no one else the opportunity to make decisions. In my opinion there was never an actual friendship between Jack and Ralph. It was simple curiosity that made them connect in the beginning. However, I think that they also had an immediate, foul suspicion towards each other. Jack did not like being under someone's control and Ralph must have picked up on this. Therefore an honest and profound friendship was never really an option for these two very dissimilar individuals.