

# Lord of the flies

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



“ There is a savage beast in every man, and when you hand that man a sword or spear and send him forth to war, the beast stirs,” proclaims George R. R Martin. The human nature is controllable if there are rules and an inducement to follow them but as soon as these rules begin to disappear, humanity tends to fade away and we begin to gravitate towards savagery. In the story “ Lord of the Flies” by William Golding, the human nature is thoroughly explored with the conflict of the two main characters: Ralph who represents the half of civilization and Jack who represented the other half of savagery.

The book displays the importance of all rules created to run civilization and the result of what happens once these rules cease to exist. It shows that once the civil ways of society are forgotten, the only possible outcome becomes complete madness and savagery. It presents the reader with a few children stranded on an island, whose natural inclination was to stay civil and fair as they were taught to be.

They decide to pick a leader and vote on one of the elder boys; Ralph, who then lays out rules and duties for the rest of the children, but once the authority given to Jack is misused, and the rules are forgotten, the ways of civilization are neglected, and the rules are overcome by insanity. The first step towards savagery began with Jack’s increasing bloodlust and demand for food, he transformed into a complete savage and began to forget all the rules set in place by society, misleading the group of followers he had. The second reason for the increased savagery would be Ralph’s loss of authority and the increasing insignificance of the conch used to keep the boys in control. The conch and the usual meetings they would have to discuss their

situations was the one thing they kept from their old world, with the loss of the conch, it represented a loss of structure, society, and civility. The final reason for the inevitable savagery would be the changes in the behavior of the children caused by the increasing fear in their minds. These were children who had never left a guardian's care, they had no idea how to make their own decisions, let alone live life independently, as the fear increased, the children began to take desperate actions which they deemed important for survival. The increasing bloodlust found within Jack was one of the most important events in this book. Jack was introduced as "the boy who controlled [the choir, later known as the hunters]," a young man competing for the position of power with Ralph, who was elected the chief, as a result of a vote by the boys (William Golding 15). Jack had a few stages to his beastly transformation, he began with his introduction to his prey, when he wasn't willing to kill, as a part of him was still civilized, "They knew very well why he hadn't [killed the pig]: because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood," (Golding, 29). After experiencing this embarrassment, he later felt an urge to kill, "[Jack] tried to convey the compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up. I went on. I thought, by myself— The madness came into his eyes again. I thought I might kill," (51). The first hunt reflected a form of troubling savagery since Jack was only able to successfully complete it because he made "the mask (), behind which [he] hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness," and finally "cut the pig's throat," while the re-enactment that included dancing and chanting "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood," showed that their hunting and their sentiment on this matter go

beyond what is necessary to provide for their diet (Golding 66, 73, 72). After Jack publicly denounces the leadership and the rules, " Bullocks to the rules! We're strong " we hunt!" and goes onto " stabbing [a mother sow] downwards with his knife," he felt confident enough to hurt a human as he realized there were no rules applicable to him (Golding, 149). He turned to his primitive nature and began hunting Ralph and his previous friends, his savage nature was so contagious that it got the best of most children present on this island and with the lack of something such as the conch holding them together, the children were all wild such as animals. The conch was an irreplaceable item in the novel, Lord of the Flies. It represented democracy, structure but also the wish to stay civil. It was found by Piggy and Ralph with the idea of using it to " call the others. Have a meeting. They'll come when they hear us" (Golding, 22). This showed that the conch had the power to bring everyone together for a meeting representing the symbol of authority and order relating to the civilization among the boys. Soon after the meeting, Ralph decided that "[he'll] give the conch to the next person to speak. He can hold it when he's speaking. () And he won't be interrupted. Except by me," (Golding 31). This proves that they still believe in the old civilized ways as this is a representation of a classroom and children politely putting their hands up, in order to speak. The conch, however, continues to lose its value over time as the children begin to follow Jack more, as he offers more food. Hence, they give into desire and begin to ignore and depreciate the rules created for them as he decides that " the conch doesn't count at this end of the island," eventually leading to the conch to becoming a useless item in this society. With the death of Piggy and

"[explosion of the conch] into a thousand white fragments and [it] ceased to exist," it marked the end of authority among the boys and led to Jack being one with savagery (Golding, 200). Nonetheless, the only reason Jack was able to exploit the minds of children around the island would be the fear of the beast, this made their minds weak and frail while allowing them to give into any decisions without a critical approach. The final example which showed the ignorance of rules around the boys leading to inevitable savagery and madness would be the fear of the beast. Since very early in the novel, the beast has caused great fear within the boys. The fear began with the imagination from the littluns, " Tell us about the snake-thing. Now he says it was a beastie. Beastie? A snake-thing. Ever so big. He saw it," and became too real when Samneric proclaimed having seen a beast, " It was furry. There was something moving behind its head " wings. The beast moved too " That was awful. It kind of sat up " () There were eyes " Teeth " Claws-, we ran as fast as we could," (Golding 34, 108-109). The fear kept the boys from lighting a fire on the side of the mountain and scared many littluns at night acting as a very harmful factor to their health. Soon enough, the fear caused Jack to separate "[The pig's] head for the beast. It's a gift," as they believed an offering would please it. The boys in Jack's group believed that the beast really did leave them alone because of this act and for further safety decide to "[sharpen] a stick at both ends," (211). This meant for Ralph that they were willing to kill him to impale his head and offer it to the beast. The savagery from the fear alone is what caused the final conflict between Ralph and Jack, while Ralph held onto the only civility on this island, his own. In conclusion, once the civil ways of society are neglected and forgotten, the

only future for a human is absolute savagery. In this book, the rules were abandoned because of three things: Jack's increasing bloodthirst and obsession with hunting, the increasing insignificance of the conch leading to failed leadership from Ralph and oppressive actions caused by fear inside of the boys. Lord of the flies is a document of civilization giving way to savagery within the primitive nature of a human as the boys stranded on the island become guided only by their natural instincts to hunt, negligence of any rules and fear.