

# The mask in lord of the flies

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



Ralph demonstrates many different dimensions in his character in the first four chapters of *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding. Ralph is portrayed as the novel's protagonist but unintentionally sways towards evil at some points in the novel. Golding describes him as the largest boy on the island, but has a "mildness about his mouth that proclaims no devil" (page 7). His size, demeanor and use of the conch shell prove him to be the chosen leader of the group of boys on the island. He is the direct representation of order, leadership, civilization and innocence.

Ralph's innocence is shown early on in the novel when he is unable to comprehend why the other boys chase their barbaric instincts and focus solely on killing the piglet, whereas he rather works towards a common goal, and proceeds by organizing a signal fire to be made and building shelters. His innocence is also proved when he accidentally spills Piggy's nickname, which he was not to tell anyone. When Piggy gets upset over this, Ralph apologizes and shrugs it off not knowing the damage he unintentionally caused Piggy.

Ralph discovers a use for the conch shell; he brings the boys together and discusses how they should proceed, with building shelters, a fire and hunting. Ralph takes into account the littluns' fears of the beastie, by putting great importance on building shelters to provide a sense of protection and 'home'. As Oldsey and Weintraub state in *The Art of William Golding*, Ralph occupies himself "doing what must be done rather than what one would rather do" (page 22). Proving him to be the protagonist in *The Lord of the Flies*.