



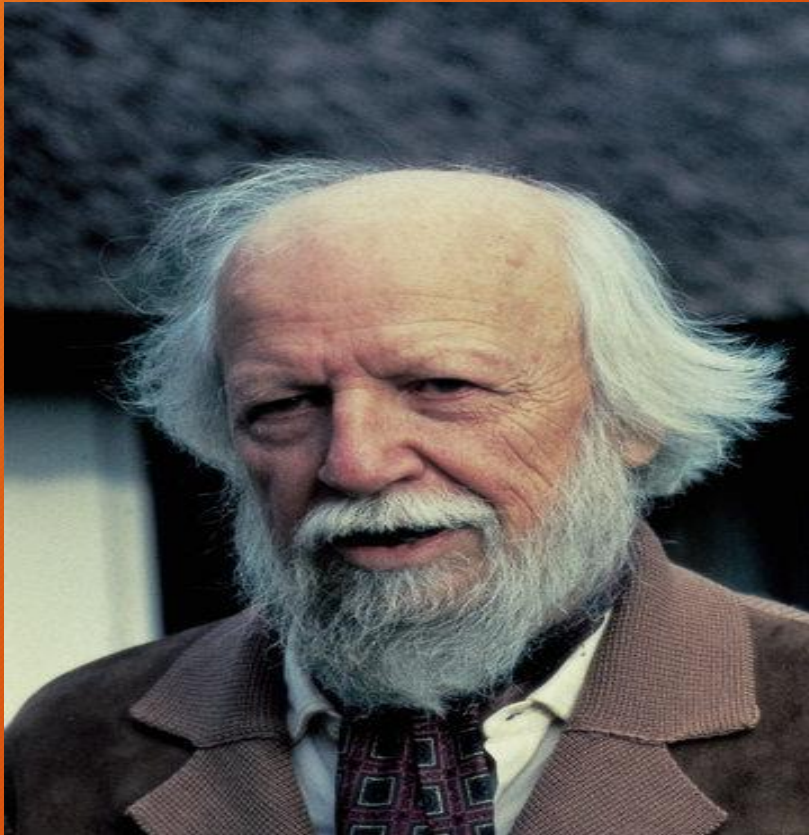
Lord of The Flies - A study in miniature

Submitted By:

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About the author



- Born in Cornwall, England
- Focussed on English Literature at Oxford University after giving up the study of natural sciences.
- Worked as an actor, director and producer at a small scale theatre.
- Published a slim volume of poetry in 1934.
- Worked as a school teacher in England.
- Joined the Royal Navy in 1940 in World War II and served with distinction for over five years and later resumed teaching and novel writing.

Renowned works

NOVELS:

- Lord of the Flies(1954). Ultimately the best seller in England and the USA.
- The Inheritors(1955)
- Pincher Martin(1956)
- The Brass Butterfly(1958)
- Free Fall(1959)
- The Spice(1964)
- The Pyramid(1967)
- Darkness Visible(1979)

THREE COLLECTIONS OF ESSAYS:

- The Hot Gate and other Occasional Pieces(1966)
- A Moving Target (1982)
- An Egyptian Journal(1985)

A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES:

- The Scorpion God(1971)

Awards and Honours

- Membership in the Royal Society of literature in 1955.
- The honorary designation Commander of the British Empire (BE) in 1965.
- Knighthood in 1988.
- His novel *Rites of Passage* (1980) won the Booker Prize, a prestigious British award.
- Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983.

Background

- Written after World War II, a period of general bloodshed and massacre of six million Jews by the Nazis. Pessimistic strain obviously traced.
- Use of a futuristic technical device, a passenger safety tube in passenger planes providing a background. The modern world of Atomic War, Supersonic airplanes and the threat of war.

Source of inspiration

- R.M. Ballantyne's novel 'The Coral Island', published in 1857.
- Real life violence and brutality of World War II.

Location and setting

An uninhabited Coral island in the Pacific:

- The Jungle or Central section with forest growth - Platform.
- The mountain at one end.
- The Coral rock or rock castle connected by a narrow sand bank to the main island at the other end.
- Beach

Title

Lord of the flies - A sow's head offered to the beast on a stake by Jack. It symbolises the prevalence of evil forces that lie within us and the power of evil in the society. It is a satanic symbol, a symbol of terror. The encounter between Simon and the Lord of the Flies symbolises the conflict between the good and evil that occurs in every man.

Plot Summary

During an atomic war, an aircraft carrying 30 pre-adolescent boys crashes on an uninhabited coral island in the Pacific. The passenger tube lands them on the island. The group of children organise themselves with the help of a conch and choose Ralph, a boy of twelve their leader.

Jack, the leader of a choir represents the antagonistic forces. Division of work takes place democratically at an initial level. Differences arise. The bigger children called biguns and the smaller one called littluns carry out the task of hunting, building shelters and keeping a smoke fire running on the top of the mountain to facilitate rescue operations with the help of a ship likely to notice them from a distance.

Plot summary(contd.)

A rumour about the prevalence of a “beast” in the jungle creates panic and nightmares. Jack is chosen as the new chief. The democratic forces represented by Piggy and Ralph are undermined. Ralph ultimately becomes an outcast. Three of the members - a little child with a mulberry mark, Piggy and Simon lose their life. Violence takes place and savagery dominates every aspect of civilisation. The crew is ultimately saved by a naval officer who arrives with a rescue party. The fire that he notices is not the signal fire but a destructive fire that engulfs the entire jungle, initially a paradise and now a wasteland.

Symbols

- The Island: microcosm of the adult world
- The Conch Shell: authority and democratisation, civilisation and order. The crushing of the conch shell signifies the erosion of civilisation, intellect, and rationalism of the island.
- Piggy's Glasses: intellectual power and power of science. The theft and breaking of Piggy's glasses is also a symbol of savagery overtaking and giving intellect a back seat.
- The Signal Fire: the hope of survival on the island

Symbols(contd.)

- The Beast: instinct of savagery
- Castle rock: Destructive forces, increased primitivism.
- Painted Faces: A masked character, a new way of life full of chaos and loss of identity.
- Darkness of the night: The darkness within one's self, inherent fear and savage instincts
- Butterflies: innocence and purity

Characters as allegorical symbols

- **Ralph:** a passive hero, dreamer, democratic, adventurous, but hunted at the end, symbolises order and leadership.
- **Piggy:** symbol of intellect and scientific advancement, a thinker, serious-minded, murdered at the end.
- **Jack:** a natural leader, symbol of savagery, dictatorial, ruthless leadership, power hungry forces, divide and rule policy.
- **Simon:** Christ figure in the novel, sacrificed at the alter of inhumanity, full of natural human goodness, brave and daring, imaginative. Talks to the Lord of the Flies and solves the mystery of the beast, murdered for no fault of his.

Characters as allegorical symbols(contd.)

- **Roger:** a small, dark boy, sadist, brutal and blood thirsty, kills Piggy.
- **The Boys or the Biguns:** symbolise a political state of rivalries and antagonism.
- **The Littluns:** represent the common people at the mercy of the political characters
- **The Island:** represents the faction ridden world, torn by personal interests.

Themes

- Civilisation vs Savagery.
- The loss of innocence.
- Conflict between good and evil.
- Power Politics- Democratic forces vs Dictatorial forces.
- The Universality of guilt (presented by the combined role of Ralph and Piggy in the murderous attempt).
- Disintegration of a society, the study of the identity of man.
- The inherent evil in every man- fear, hate and violence are inherent in every man, even children.

References

- A Critical History of English Literature Vol. II by David Daiches.
- www.wikipedia.org
- Coles Notes. Rama Brothers India Pvt. Ltd.
- Golding William, Ed. E.L.Epstein. Lord of the Flies