**William Golding Biography**



**Synopsis**

William Golding was born September 19, 1911, in Saint Columb Minor, Cornwall, England. In 1935 he started teaching English and philosophy in Salisbury. He temporarily left teaching in 1940 to join the Royal Navy. In 1954 he published his first novel, *Lord of the Flies*. In 1983, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. On June 19, 1993, he died in Perranarworthal, Cornwall, England.

**Early Life**

William Golding was born on September 19, 1911, in Saint Columb Minor, Cornwall, England. He was raised in a 14th-century house next door to a graveyard. His mother, Mildred, was an active suffragette who fought for women’s right to vote. His father, Alex, worked as a schoolmaster.

William received his early education at the school his father ran, Marlborough Grammar School. When William was just 12 years old, he attempted, unsuccessfully, to write a novel. A frustrated child, he found an outlet in bullying his peers. Later in life, William would describe his childhood self as a brat, even going so far as to say, “I enjoyed hurting people.”

After primary school, William went on to attend Brasenose College at Oxford University. His father hoped he would become a scientist, but William opted to study English literature instead. In 1934, a year before he graduated, William published his first work, a book of poetry aptly entitled *Poems*. The collection was largely overlooked by critics.

**Teaching**

After college, Golding worked in settlement houses and the theater for a time. Eventually, he decided to follow in his father’s footsteps. In 1935 Golding took a position teaching English and philosophy at Bishop Wordsworth’s School in Salisbury. Golding’s experience teaching unruly young boys would later serve as inspiration for his novel *Lord of the Flies*.

Although passionate about teaching from day one, in 1940 Golding temporarily abandoned the profession to join the Royal Navy and fight in World War II.

**Royal Navy**

Golding spent the better part of the next six years on a boat, except for a seven-month stint in New York, where he assisted Lord Cherwell at the Naval Research Establishment. While in the Royal Navy, Golding developed a lifelong romance with sailing and the sea.

During World War II, he fought battleships at the sinking of the Bismarck, and also fended off submarines and planes. Lieutenant Golding was even placed in command of a rocket-launching craft.

Of his World War II experiences, Golding has said, “I began to see what people were capable of doing. Anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head.” Like his teaching experience, Golding’s participation in the war would prove to be fruitful material for his fiction.

In 1945, after World War II had ended, Golding went back to teaching and writing.

**Lord of the Flies**

In 1954, after 21 rejections, Golding published his first and most acclaimed novel, *Lord of the Flies*.

The novel told the gripping story of a group of adolescent boys stranded on a deserted island after a plane wreck. *Lord of the Flies* explored the savage side of human nature as the boys, let loose from the constraints of society, brutally turned against one another in the face of an imagined enemy. Riddled with symbolism, the book set the tone for Golding’s future work, in which he continued to examine man’s internal struggle between good and evil. Since its publication, the novel has been widely regarded as a classic, worthy of in-depth analysis and discussion in classrooms around the world.

In 1963, the year after Golding retired from teaching, Peter Brook made a film adaptation of the critically acclaimed novel. Two decades later, at the age of 73, Golding was awarded the 1983 Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1988 he was knighted by England’s Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1990 a new film version of the *Lord of the Flies* was released, bringing the book to the attention of a new generation of readers.

**Death and Legacy**

Golding spent the last few years of his life quietly living with his wife, Ann Brookfield, at their house near Falmouth, Cornwall, where he continued to toil at his writing. On June 19, 1993, Golding died of a heart attack in Perranarworthal, Cornwall. He was survived by his wife and their two children, David and Judith. After Golding passed away, his completed manuscript for *The Double Tongue* was published posthumously.

Among the most successful novels of Golding’s writing career were *Rites of Passage* (winner of the 1980 Booker McConnell Prize),*Pincher Martin*, *Free Fall* and *The Pyramid*. While Golding was mainly a novelist, his body of work also includes poetry, plays, essays and short stories.

**Writing Style:**

Golding’s often allegorical fiction makes broad use of allusions to biblical literature, mythology, and Christian symbolism. Although no distinct thread unites his novels and his technique varies, Golding deals principally with evil and emerges with what has been characterized as a kind of dark optimism. Golding uses characters to describe conflicts and traits inherent in society and its members. Golding feels that man is inherently evil, and this evil must be confronted and controlled. Society is both a victim and controller of this evil. Although, like many authors, he draws on his personal history, Golding is unique in the way that he uses the actual to build a structure of meaning. The symbolism of his novels is often more important than the action. Though the literal story in itself is interesting, his characters, images, and settings go beyond the merely literal, to represent universal truths about human nature.

His novels are also, in some respects, close to actuality. There is realism in his description of physical detail and in his dependence on his own experience for documentation. For instance, Lord of the Flies depends on his accurate observation and recording, as well as his knowledge of the old English Epic and experience of the terrors and tensions of war. Golding can be said to be a writer of myths. It is the pattern of myth that we find his manner of writing. For instance, as a young man, he believe that man would be able to prefect himself by improving society and eventually doing away with all social evil, a view similar to H.G. Wells. Golding argues against those who think that it is the political or other systems that create evil. To him, evil springs from the depths of man himself. It is the wickedness in human beings that creates the evil systems, or, that changes what, from the beginnings, is or could be good, into something unjust and destructive.

His first published novel, *Lord of the Flies,* has been a great success ever since its publication in 1954. It is important to be aware of the emphasis he places on language and of the stylistic devices he employs in order to create meaning.

On the very first pages it becomes clear that the reading of *Lord of the Flies* can be a challenging experience. Golding uses a huge quantity of different words, synonyms, and sophisticated words (“effulgence”, “suffusion”, “decorum”, “belligerence”, “ululation”). The author applies a personal perspective to tell the story, which means he does not know everything or at least does not show his knowledge, and speaks “over the shoulder” of a single character. Golding is also very skilled in the description of landscapes and nature.

In general, Golding uses plenty of metaphors, similes, and alliterations throughout the novel. Not all of them exist just by chance. There are also several important symbols, in addition to climaxes and personifications. This range of stylistic devices, connected with the diversity of words Golding uses and the tension he creates, makes *Lord of the Flies* a challenging and enriching piece of literature.

GARDEN OF EDEN SYNOPSIS

### Book of Genesis

In the Garden of Eden story of the Biblical book of *Genesis* (Gen 2:4-3:26), God molds Adam from the dust of the Earth, then forms Eve from one of Adam's ribs and places them both in the garden, eastward in Eden. God charges both [Adam and Eve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_and_Eve) to tend the garden in which they live, and specifically commands Adam not to eat from the [Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tree_of_the_Knowledge_of_Good_and_Evil). Eve is quizzed by the [serpent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serpent_%28symbolism%29) (snake) why she avoids eating of this tree. In the dialogue between the two, Eve elaborates on the commandment not to eat of its fruit. She says that even if she touches the tree she will die. The serpent responds that she will not die, rather she would become like a god, knowing good and evil. Eve then eats from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and persuades Adam to eat from it too. They then become aware, aware of each others’ nudity. God finds them, confronts them, and judges them for disobeying; it is also widely believed that the snake was also the devil in disguise as well.

It is at this point that God expels them from Eden, to keep Adam and Eve from partaking of the [Tree of Life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tree_of_Life_%28Judeo-Christian%29). The story says that God placed [cherubim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherubim) with an omnidirectional "flaming" sword to guard against any future entrance into the garden.

\*\*\*Loss of Man’s Innocence – Original Sin (giving in to temptation)

\*\*\*Fall from Paradise – the fault of Eve (all women)

**Define the following terms:**

Allegory –

Alliteration -

Allusion -

Diction -

Mood -

Tone –

Context clues –

Imagery –

Personification –

Climax –

*Lord of the Flies*

 *Motifs*

**MOTIF** - a recurring subject, theme, idea, etc., in a literary, artistic, or musical work.

**THEME** – The theme is an underlying truth of the story, not the plot – but what the plot means. (In *Lord of the Flies* there are many themes, and they are often interwoven with each other).

**THE NEED FOR SOCIAL ORDER**

The most obvious of the themes is man’s need for civilization. Contrary to the belief that man is innocent and society evil, the story shows that laws and rules, policemen and schools are necessary to keep the darker side of human nature in line.

**THE LOSS OF INNOCENCE**

The existence of civilization allows man to remain innocent or ignorant of his own nature. Although man needs civilization, it is important that he also be aware of his more primitive instincts. Only in this way can he reach true maturity. Golding implies that the loss of innocence has little to do with age but is related to a person’s understanding of human nature. It can happen at any age or not at all. Painful though it may be, this loss of innocence by coming to terms with reality is necessary if humanity is to survive.

**THE LOSS OF IDENTITY**

Civilization separates man from the animals by teaching him to think and make choices. When civilization slips away and man reverts to his more primitive nature, his identity disintegrates. The boys use masks to cover their identities, and this allows them to kill and to murder. The loss of a personal name personifies the loss of selfhood and identity.

**POWER**

Different types of power, with their uses and abuses, are central to the story. Each kind of power is used by one of the characters. Democratic power is shown when choices and decisions are shared among many. Authoritarian power allows one person to rule by threatening and terrifying others. Spiritual power recognizes internal and external realities and attempts to integrate them. Brute force, the most primitive form of power, is indiscriminate.

**FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN**

Fear of the unknown on the island revolves around the boys’ terror of the beast. Fear is allowed to grow because they play with the idea of it. They cannot fully accept the notion of the beast, nor can they let go of it. They whip themselves into hysteria, and their attempts to resolve their fears are too feeble to convince themselves one way or the other. The recognition that no real beast exists, that there is only the power of fear, is one of the deepest meaning of the story.