Boys don’t hesitate to torture and murder.

The beast unleashed
Finally, they turn their aggression on the rest of Ralph’s group, especially on Piggy who remains the most civilized of all. They don’t hesitate to harass the others, stealing Piggy’s glasses and finally committing murder. (If you want to find out who, check the website for the extract.) The final confrontation is not only between two groups of boys, but also between civilisation and barbarism.

The first major theme of Lord of the Flies is the fragility of civilization. The second is the conflict between rational living bound by rules versus a savage tribal one ruled by the law of jungle. Golding shows that without basic rules, people will degenerate into an almost animal state. They will choose laziness instead of work and use violence instead of reason.

Ryan Scott (Australia)
Josef Šorm (CR)

William Golding’s Lord of the Flies seems to be a classic story about a group of boys stranded on an island and their survival there. However, if you expect a Robinson Crusoe-type of story, you will be disappointed. The main theme is the conflict between order and anarchy.

A plane with British public school2 boys crashes on a deserted island. There are no adults around and the boys have to form a society in order to survive. Ralph becomes the leader thanks to a combination of his charisma, natural leadership and rationality3. He organizes the boys into different groups based on certain tasks. Ralph is often guided by fearful but intelligent “Piggy” – a nickname based on the boy’s fat build4.

Two different groups
The boys have to deal with the typical tasks of survival – how to find something to eat and how to keep a fire burning to attract the attention of passing ships. They also start to fear a mysterious creature simply called “the beast”. Their anxiety5 and laziness6 provide a perfect opportunity for the more aggressive Jack to challenge Ralph’s leadership and gain command. Jack is the head of the group of “hunters”. Rather than gather food and keep the fire burning, Jack wants to hunt for fun. The boys under his command gradually give in7 to their violent instincts. Later they turn into a savage8 tribe9 lacking any signs of civilisation.

The beast unleashed
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William Golding (1911–1993)
While a student at Oxford, William Golding published a collection of poetry, which failed to arouse much interest. For the next two decades, he worked as a schoolmaster. His first book, Lord of the Flies, was initially rejected by publishers. When it was eventually published it was an immediate success.

Vocabulary
1 to be stranded [strəndid] – zůstat trčet
2 public school – britská soukromá střední škola
3 rationality [ræʃə’nælətɪ] – racionálnost
4 build – postava
5 anxiety [æŋ’ziəstɪ] – úzkost
6 laziness [‘leznəs] – lenost
7 to challenge [‘tʃæləndʒ] – vyzvat
8 to give in – podlehnut
9 violent [‘vaiənt] – násilný
10 savage [sævædʒ] – divoký
11 tribe [trɪb] – kmen
12 to unleash [‘ʌnliʃ] – vypustit
13 to harass [‘hɑrəs, ˈhørəs] – obtěžovat
14 confrontation [kɒnfrəntʃən] – konflikt
15 fragility [ˈfræɡələti] – křehkost
16 bound by rules [baʊnd] – svázán pravidly
17 to degenerate [dɪdʒənərət] – zvrhnout se
18 to arouse [ˈəraʊz] – vyvolat
19 to reject [rɪ’ekt] – odmítnout

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