

# SA MAJESTÉ DES MOUCHES

de Peter BROOK

## FICHE TECHNIQUE

Titre original : The Lord of the Flies

Pays : GB

Durée : 1h32

Année : 1963

Genre : Drame

Scénario : Peter BROOK d'après le roman de William GOLDING

Directeur de la photographie : Tom HOLLYMAN

Montage : Peter BROOK, Gerald FEIL, Jean-Claude LUBTCHANSKY

Musique : Raymond LEPPARD

Production : Two Arts Ltd

Distribution : Carlotta Films

Interprètes : James AUBREY (Ralph), Tom CHAPIN (Jack), Hugh EDWARDS (Piggy), Roger ELWIN (Roger), Roger ALLAN (Piers), Tom GAMAN (Simon)

Sortie : 13 août 1963

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## THE PLOT

Some English schoolboys are on a plane carrying them to safety after nuclear war has broken out. The plane is shot down and they are stranded on a desert island. A surviving boy, Ralph, is delighted at the prospect of playing with no grown-ups around.

A fat boy nicknamed Piggy suggests that Ralph blow into a conch shell to call any other survivors. Boys appear from the jungle and they hold a meeting. Ralph is elected chief, and certain basic rules are agreed upon. Jack, the tyrannical leader of a choir, is envious of Ralph, so the new chief diplomatically allows Jack to retain command of his choirboys, who are to act as hunters.

So far, it all seems like a game, but when Jack has a chance to kill a pig, he cannot do it "because of the unbearable blood". One of the boys scares everyone by claiming to have seen a "beastie". Then a small boy disappears.

The situation begins to degenerate: the rules are gradually forgotten, and the boys' fear of the Beast grows to hysteria. Ralph, advised by Piggy, insists on keeping a fire burning to attract rescuers, and he tries to maintain order. "The rules", he says, "are the only things we've got!" Jack challenges Ralph's authority and wins over most of the boys, who become hunters, paint themselves like savages, and finally lose all sense of reality: they kill Piggy and a boy called Simon, and begin to hunt Ralph like an animal.

Ralph is saved by the arrival of some British sailors. He weeps with relief and "for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart."

## THE CONTEXT

William Golding did not believe in childish innocence. In 1985, he said that "the root of our sin is there, in the child." He believed that man was inherently violent.

The boys in *Lord of the Flies* compare their desert island to the one in RM Ballantyne's adventure story *Coral Island* (1858) and this is no coincidence. *Lord of the Flies* was Golding's response to what he considered Ballantyne's misguided optimism about mankind. In *Coral Island*, the shipwrecked boys remain civilized and even convince some local "savages" to burn their heathen idols.

*Lord of the Flies* was written 100 years later, in a world that had been purged of optimism: the Nazis had shown that human beings are capable of limitless cruelty.

The title of the novel is a translation of the Hebrew term *baal zebub*, literally "fly lord". In English Beelzebub is another name for the devil. In the story, the "fly lord" - a fly-ridden pig's skull - is a projection of the irrational, violent side to the boy's nature. Ralph smashes the idol but Jack's tribe want to cut off Ralph's head and turn his

skull into an even more repulsive pagan totem. The “fly lord” would certainly have taken permanent control of the island if the British sailors had not arrived. Ralph is saved but this does not imply any optimism on Golding’s part concerning the boys’ humanity or rather inhumanity.

## CLASSWORK

### Pre-watching activities

1. What would you do if you were shipwrecked on a desert island with a group of people? (society, survival, territory...) →gr: hypotheses
2. What risks may/might you encounter on a desert island? →gr: probabilities about present/future situations
3. Illustration page 128 XL 2nde: what event(s) may have led to this scene? →gr: probabilities about past situations

### Activities after the viewing:

1. Texts pages 128-130 XL 2nde and grid:

#### The End of Innocence

*Lord of the Flies*, William Golding (1954)

- Vocabulary:

- 1.1 : tiny : minuscule
- 1.1 : a tot : un bambin
- 1.2 : a belly : un ventre
- 1.11 : the search : la recherche
- 1.19 : jolly good show : sacré spectacle
- 1.20 : feeting : fugace, bref
- 1.20 : dumbly : bêttement
- 1.22 : scorched up : complètement brûlé
- 1.25 : matted : emmêlé

- Overall comprehension:

1. Who do the following words refer to ?  
- savages - British boys
2. At the end, how do Ralph and the other boys react? What about the officer?

- Detailed comprehension:

1. Why does the officer consider the fact they’re all British boys to be in contradiction with the situation they’re now in?
  - He expected British boys to...
  - He didn’t expect them to...
  - He...
2. Complete Ralph’s two unfinished sentences in a logical way:
  - 1.15 « It was like that at first », said Ralph, « before things-... »
  - 1.17 « We were together then-... »
3. On lines 20/29, pick out all expressions evoking the protagonists’ feelings. Why do these feelings emerge at this particular moment?
4. Read the summary of the Coral Island, a book well-known to British children and explain why Ralph looked at the officer « dumbly » (1.20) when he referred to this famous story.
5. Ralph wept for « the end of innocence » and « the darkness of man’s heart ». In concrete terms, what do you think these two expressions mean?

2. Grammar practise: infinitive clauses

**The End of Innocence**

*Lord of the Flies*, William Golding (1954)

• Infinitive clauses

Verbs which can be followed by infinitive clauses:

advise, allow, beg (prier), compel (contraindre), encourage, expect, forbid, induce (pousser à), invite, offer (proposer), order, persuade, prefer, promise, recommend, remind, request, teach, tell, urge, want, warn... + S + would like

1. Rephrase the following sentences using the prompts provided:

a) Boys, you must come with me.

The officer ordered .....

b) Please, come on board the cruiser.

He invited .....

c) Jack made the twins change sides.

Jack persuaded .....

d) The officer made Ralph think of his parents.

The officer reminded .....

2. Same exercise, the verbs are to be found in the list:

a) I wouldn't have thought you could behave like this!

The officer .....

b) Don't be scared!

The officer .....

c) Ralph, count the boys!

The officer .....

d) I suggest that you all wash before coming with me.

The officer .....

e) Please, don't weep!

The officer .....

3. Grammar practise: probability

**Lord of the Flies**

• Grammar practise: expressing probability with modals

1. Decide whether the following sentences express probability about a present or a past situation.

- Ralph may have been afraid of the beast, that's why he ran away.
- The officer is upset since he may have to report the sad events on the island.
- There must have been a time when they all got on well together.

2. Complete with the logical ending:

- Piggy couldn't find his glasses,
  - Jack must have stolen them.
  - Jack must steal them.
- On board the rescue ship, all the boys will be together and
  - there might be trouble again.
  - there might have been trouble again.

3. Make equivalent sentences using a modal.

- a) At the beginning, they surely played a lot.
- b) And after, perhaps they tried to get organized.
- c) They most probably kept a fire on, as a signal for ships sailing near the island.
- d) Maybe the arrival of adults on the island reminded the children of forgotten rules.
- e) They spent so many weeks there that their parents certainly believe they're lost for ever.

4. Writing an essay:

Speaking about *The Lord of the Flies*, W. Golding once said: « Man is a savage at heart. » Do you share his opinion?

Possible definitions for 'savage':

- primitive
- cruel
- animal
- foreign/unknown
- uncivilized
- uneducated

1. Introduce the subject (quote from Golding) and give your definition of 'savage'.
2. Develop your ideas, don't forget to give examples taken from life, books or films or refer to historical events...
3. Conclude, answering the question clearly and branching out if possible.

Translate the following sentences into English:

- Sur la terre, les hommes se battent pour obtenir le meilleur.
- Je suis d'accord avec Golding.
- Ces tribus sont considérées comme sauvages.
- Les hommes naissent dans des sociétés avec des valeurs différentes.
- Les lois nous permettent de respecter les autres.
- En conclusion, 'savage' peut avoir des significations différentes.