

Read Golding's obituary and respond to the question that appears after it.

## **June 20, 1993 OBITUARY William Golding Is Dead at 81; The Author of 'Lord of the Flies'**

**By BRUCE LAMBERT**

William Golding, the Nobel Prize-winning author of the classic "Lord of the Flies" and other disturbing novels exploring the dark side of human nature, died yesterday in his home in Perranarworthal, England. He was 81.

A heart attack was the probable cause, said Matthew Evans, chairman of Mr. Golding's publisher, Faber and Faber.

He was 73 when he won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1983, and he was knighted in 1988. Although he was primarily a novelist, his writing also included short stories, dramas, essays and poetry.

He was best known for his themes of the struggle between good and evil and for symbolism that invited interpretations on many levels. Indeed, some critics complained that he relied too heavily on symbolism that weighed down his work.

After 21 rejections, "Lord of the Flies" was finally issued in 1954 as his first published book, and it remains his most popular.

It portrays a group of proper British schoolboys who, when marooned on a deserted island by a plane crash during a global atomic war, lose their societal inhibitions and regress into blood-curdling tribal savagery. His allegory achieved a cult status. The book inspired two films, was translated into 26 languages, sold millions of copies and became a standard on college and high school reading lists.

Sir William recalled that as a teacher he once allowed a class of boys complete freedom in a debate, but he had to intervene as mayhem broke out. That incident and his own war experiences inspired "Lord of the Flies."

"World War II was the turning point for me," he 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." Another time he said:

"Look out," he said, "the evil is in us all."

He confessed that as a youth he was sometimes a spoiled brat and a bully and "I enjoyed hurting people."

For a man who once complained of his "inability to write poetry," Sir William made a major contribution to English literature.

Comparing him to Melville, the Nobel citation said: "William Golding's novels and stories are not only sadder moralities and dark myths about evil and treacherous, destructive forces. They are also colorful tales of adventure which can be read as such, full of narrative joy, inventiveness and excitement."

Author Malcolm Bradbury described Sir Williams as "a dominant figure since the 1950's" in English letters and said that "Lord of the Flies" was a world classic. "He was a remarkable writer -- his work is peculiarly timeless." Describing his own work, Sir William said, "I am not a theologian or a philosopher. I am a story teller." Despite his reputation for pessimism on human nature, he said, "I think good will overcome evil in the end. I don't know quite how, but I have that simple faith." Although his succeeding works never matched "Lord of the Flies" in sales, they continued to win close critical attention. They included "The Inheritors" (1955), "Pincher Martin" (1956), "Free Fall" (1959), "The Spire" (1964), "The Pyramid" (1967), "Darkness Visible" (1979) and, "Rites of Passage" (1980).

"Pincher Martin," describes the last moments of a drowning sailor. "Rites of Passage" won Britain's premier literary award, the Booker Prize, in 1980. It describes a voyage to Australia in the 19th century, showing how a pompous cleric becomes involved in a sexual scandal and dies of shame. In 1987 Sir William completed a sequel to "Rites of Passage" called "Close Quarters." A third novel, "Fire Down Below," finished the series in 1989. His own favorite was "The Inheritors," about the destruction of Neanderthal Man by Homo Sapiens.

William G. Golding was born on Sept. 19, 1911, in Cornwall. He grew up in 14th Century house, next to a graveyard, and tried writing a novel at the age of 12. He was educated at Marlborough Grammar School, where his father taught, then studied science and later English at Oxford University's Brasenose College. He graduated in 1934 and received a master's degree in 1960.

After college, he became a settlement house worker and then joined the Royal Navy. He served as a lieutenant commanding a rocket-firing ship, took part in the 1944 Normandy landings and developed an enduring love of sailing and the sea. Early in his career he took up teaching English and philosophy, acting, directing and writing in London. He once spoke of death: "I'd rather there wasn't an afterlife, really. I'd much rather not be me for thousands of years. Me? Hah!"

He spent his last years quietly with his wife of 54 years, the former Ann Brookfield, at their home near Falmouth in the Cornwall area on the southwest coast. They had two children, David and Judith, who also survive.

### William Golding's Obituary

Read William Golding's obituary. Based on what you read, choose 3 of the following statements and discuss how Golding would respond to each of your 3 chosen statements.

1. Rules are what hold everything together in our society. Without them, there would be chaos.
2. In general, people know the difference between right and wrong and act according to what they think is right.
3. Most people who are in power use their power over others in a responsible, fair way.
4. A certain amount of evil is sometimes necessary in order to survive.
5. Children are innocent and mostly do what is right and good.
6. Most people are not capable of murdering another human being.

Statement Number	Golding's Response

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