

Background information

From 1939 during the Second World War, Golding served in the Royal Navy in command of a rocket ship. He was involved in the bombardment and sinking of enemy ships, the Battle of the North Atlantic and the Normandy Landings. The character of the naval officer in the final moments of the novel may have been a persona he was familiar with. During his wartime service he witnessed and contributed to vast destruction and human suffering.

The end of the Second World War left him pessimistic and bitter about the future of mankind and our capacity for humanity or 'civilisation': he felt despair at the 'discovery' of the concentration camps as well as the use of the atomic bomb as a way of bringing about an end to the conflict. The war led him to believe in the **innate evil of humanity**. We are trapped by **original sin**.

The novel is set during a time of global conflict. His original draft of the novel, rejected by his publisher, included an opening chapter that looked at a nuclear war which caused the boys' evacuation from England and their crash. This fictional background may also explain Piggy's pessimism that they will be rescued by adults who are busy destroying each other, and his insistence that they are now responsible for and accountable to themselves.

Golding worked as a teacher in a boy's private school. From this experience he felt he gained insight into human behaviour and human potential - or lack of.