



HUMAN NATURE: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SURVIVE?

Lord of the Flies, by William Golding, was published in 1954. The novel has sold millions of copies, been translated into over 20 languages, and adapted for stage and screen. A haunting tale about a group of British schoolboys who survive a plane crash and are stranded on a remote island, it has gone on to have an immeasurable impact not just on literature, but on the wider culture. It is often used as a parable for the supposedly innate selfishness of human nature.

1. Democracy and kindness give way to greed and brutality. With the exception of Ralph, Simon and Piggy, the older boys start to bully the younger children and steal the little food they have. As leader, the egomaniacal Jack becomes increasingly manipulative and cruel so he can hold on to power. Today, 'it was like a scene from *Lord of the Flies*' is still a comment used to describe wild and unruly behaviour.

2. That's why any true story of humans facing adversity and still behaving in an inherently good and altruistic way towards each other, speaks to our hearts. A highly inspiring story to recently emerge is that of six resilient young boys, now men, from Tonga who went missing in 1965. Like the boys in *Lord of the Flies*, Tevita David Siola'a, Sione Fataua, Luke Veikoso, Fatai Stephen Latu, Kolo Fekitoa and Sione Mano Filipe Totau were marooned on an uninhabited island, but that is where the similarity ends.

3. No Tongan would be surprised at this kind of selfless behaviour as the idea of 'everyone for themselves' clashes with their cultural values. It is customary for young Tongans to be raised with the understanding that they are part of a community and that they should put other people first. But it was a great shock for the boys' families when they were informed their sons were still alive after having been missing for 15 long months. In fact, by the time the boys were found and brought home, funerals had already been held for them. Since then, their story has been shared many times in Tonga, but now their epic experience is being brought to the attention of the world in a new book, *Humankind*, by Rutger Bregman.

4. This meant they were now at the mercy of the currents, and ended up drifting for eight days. Eventually, they sighted an island, but they had a tough decision to make: stay on the damaged boat or abandon it and try to swim across the reef. Even though it was night time, they decided to swim and eventually all crawled ashore. Desperately thirsty and malnourished, they had no alternative but to hunt and eat sea birds and fish.

5. Still, this discovery hardly meant there were no further challenges to face. During the summer it barely rained, meaning the boys had little to drink. They managed to make a raft, only to see it smashed up on the reef. Then one of the boys, Fatai, fell off a cliff and broke his leg. Showing incredible resourcefulness and skill, the boys from Tonga were able to perfectly reset the bone with sticks and leaves.

6. Kolo even created a crude guitar from driftwood, a coconut, and wires salvaged from their wrecked boat. He would play this every evening and the other boys would sing to keep their spirits up. In the end, friendship, teamwork and faith kept the boys from falling into despair and ensured their survival on the island. It is a story that will be remembered for many years to come.

- A.** Rather than treating each other unfairly, they were compassionate. Instead of hoarding food, they distributed it equally. There was no abuse of power and disputes were settled in an honourable manner.
- B.** This becomes clearer as the days pass and hope of rescue fades. Although the younger boys resent being told what to do by the older ones, they agree that a raft must be built and set off in search of wood.
- C.** It is most often applied to scenes of chaos amongst children. However, the dark suspicion that adults might behave the same self-serving way in similar circumstances when order is no longer imposed, is one that many of us find hard to shake.
- D.** This wasn't their only remarkable achievement. They managed to set up a basic food garden in the poor soil, and carve out tree trunks so that they could store the little rainwater that fell in the hollows. They kept their fire burning and stuck to a duty roster.
- E.** At the beginning of the story, once the boys realise there are no adults to supervise them, they attempt to 'stick to the law' and act with decency. But as time goes on, relationships and behaviour deteriorate.
- F.** Regaining a little strength from these meagre rations, they used their bare hands to dig out a shelter in the sea cliff. After resting here for three months, and desperate to find other resources, they managed to climb up to the island's volcanic crater. To their relief, they came upon taro and banana plants, as well as a population of feral chickens.
- G.** Bored with the routine and terrible food at their strict boarding school, the boys apparently decided to sneak off, take a fishing vessel, and see whether they could sail all the way to Fiji. Unfortunately, they soon ran into trouble when the mast was snapped in high winds and the rudder broke off.