

Lady of the Flies?

- 1 Last week, Warner Bros. unveiled plans to make a new film adaption of the classic 1954 novel *Lord of the Flies*, with one controversial adjustment. The main characters will be girls instead of boys. According to screenwriter Scott McGehee, the aim is to "help people see the story anew". But many commentators took to Twitter to express their disapproval, arguing that the story is supposed to be an exploration of "toxic masculinity".
- 2 In the book, a group of schoolboys is marooned on a desert island after a plane crash, leading to a power struggle that ultimately turns bloody. Yet if the lead characters were female would this even happen? One Twitterer suggested girls would "set aside their differences", another that they'd keep "apologising to each other" until "everyone's dead". The book's author William Golding revealed in a 1993 interview that he wrote the work as a bitter critique of male-controlled society. Yet anyone who suggests women are fundamentally nicer than men clearly hasn't seen films such as *Mean Girls* and *Heathers*, said Erin Gloria Ryan on *The Daily Beast*. Women can be just as beastly as men, though it may be "in a different way".
- 3 Warner Bros. aren't motivated by a passion for gender equality, said Emine Saner in *The Observer*. 7 In the past two years, "female-led" movies have outperformed those with mainly male protagonists at the box office by 11% on average, and the suits at the studios have taken note. Hence the trend for gender-reversing remakes. Last year we had an all-female *Ghostbusters*. And coming shortly is a female version of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, titled *Nasty Women*, and a new take on the 1984 comedy *Splash*. This time round, the love interest isn't a beautiful mermaid, but a fishy-tailed Channing Tatum as a hunky merman.



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