

The English Odyssey

Introduction to the Sourcebook

Introduction composed by the sourcebook production team
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A plane full of twenty-two young scholars crashed on a seemingly deserted island. While searching for food and water, they got the strange feeling that they were all connected in some way; that this was all supposed to happen to them.

Suddenly a strange, tall man with large feet and a soul patch appeared holding a book entitled *What Writing Does and How it Does It*. He explained to the group that what they desired was not food and water, but knowledge. He went on to say that everything they needed to know to find their way off the island could be found in the book.

The students, who were terrified, only wished to get back to their families and friends. Looking to the man for help, they listened as he explained that the only way to leave the island was to join together and create a book of their own. So, with the book as their only resource, they sat down with their bark and stones and began the process of writing their book. The group, frustrated and angry with their situation, began to bicker, fight, and argue, gaining no ground. When the tall, strange man returned, they had written nothing. Their thoughts were tied up in memories of home.

Finally, one girl, by the name of Amelia, asked the tall man all of the questions the other group members had been thinking. “How are we, as a group of 22 scholars, supposed to create just one book?” she asked. The tall man replied that the best idea might be to each create their own chapter with their own special topic within the field of English Studies. A topic that interested them the most. The group jumped off their coconut stools in pure joy, excited that they had finally reached a consensus. They did realize, however, that they still had a huge task ahead of them.

They each decided to separate into six different groups that correlated with their fields of study. These groups consisted of performance, technology, linguistics, children's literature, literature, and diversity.

It took the scholars 16 weeks to produce an entire book to present to the tall man and to the world. It was a long, hard journey, but with the help of the “learning community” they finally completed a book that they were proud of.

They chose a spokesperson, whose name was Alice, to present the book to the tall man. At this moment, the mysterious man finally revealed his identity. He presented himself as a professor of English Studies at Illinois State University. All at once, the group realized how they were connected. It was their love of English that had brought them together on this strange, crazy island. And this man, this professor, was there to show them how to use it.