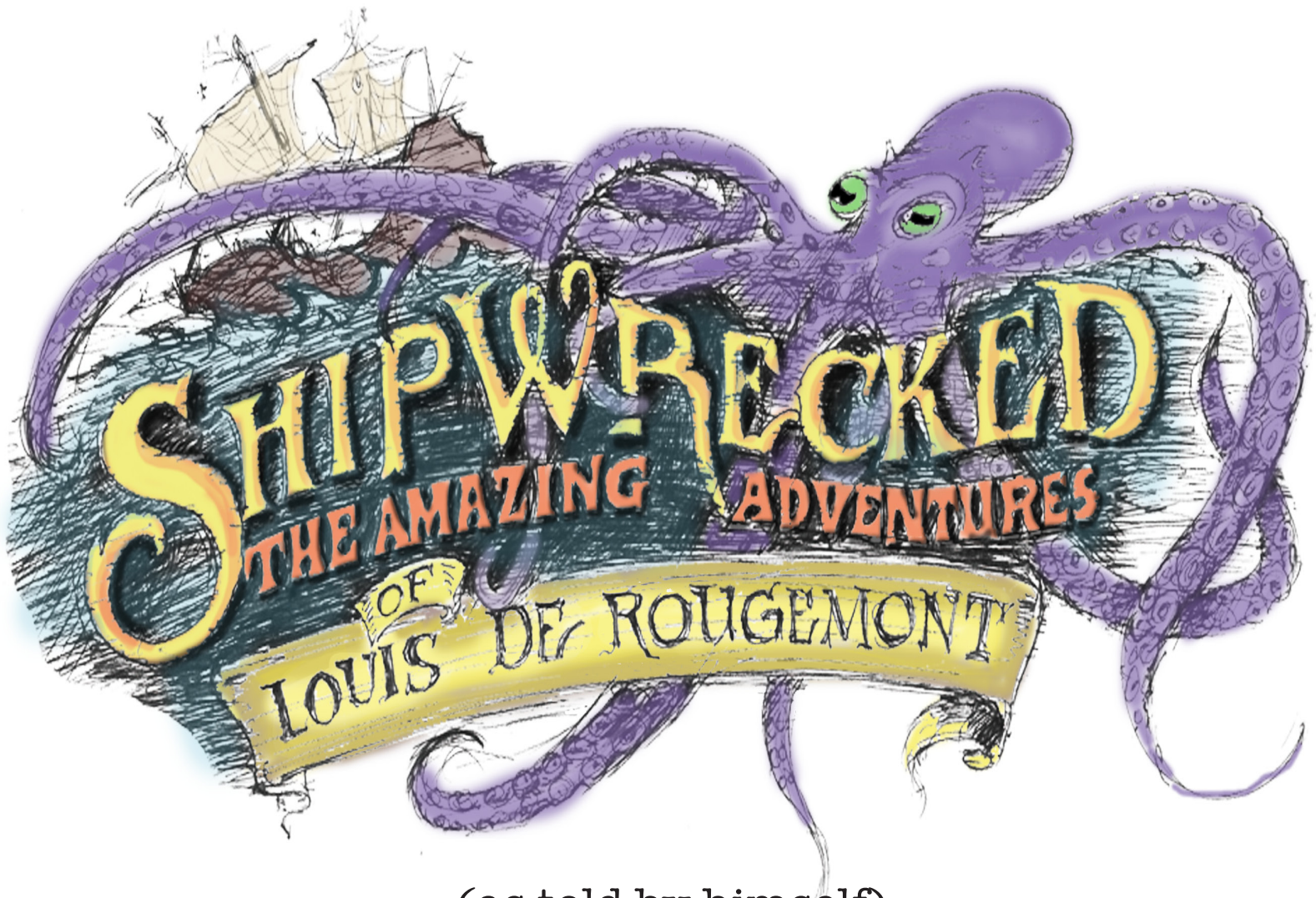


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# STUDY GUIDE

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(as told by himself)

by Donald Margulies

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**COMPANY OF FOOLS**  
A PROUD PART OF SUN VALLEY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Company of Fools  
P.O. Box 656, Sun Valley, Idaho 83353  
208.788.6520  
[www.companyoffools.org](http://www.companyoffools.org)

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The information and classroom activities in this study guide support Idaho State Department of Education Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy for grades 3-8.

# WELCOME TO THE LIBERTY

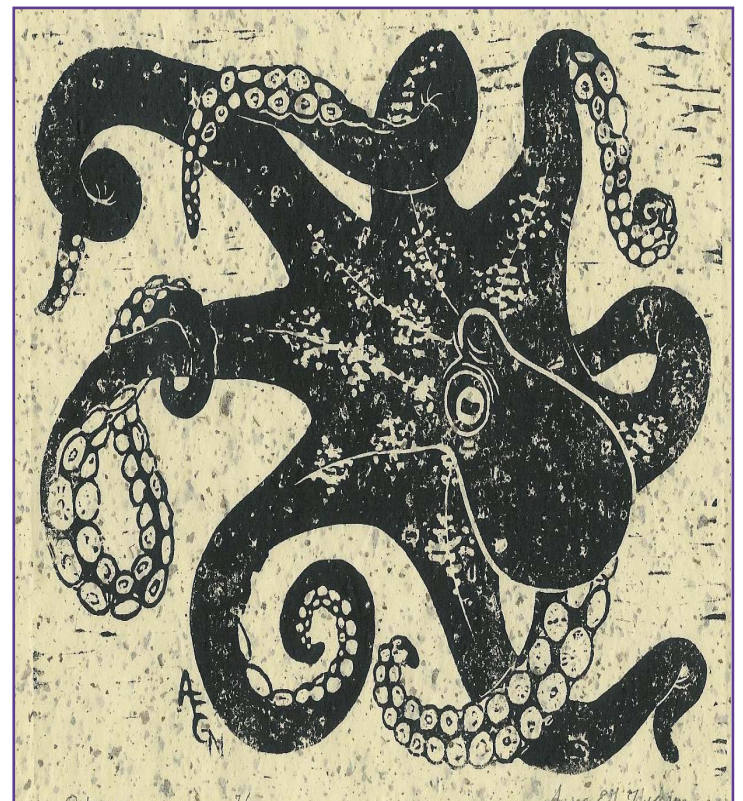
Dear Educator,

We're delighted to welcome you and your students to Company of Fools' (now a proud part of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts) production of ***Shipwrecked!*** Working with local schools is a fundamental part of Company of Fools' and The Sun Valley Center for the Arts' mission.

We hope this study guide will serve as a useful resource for you as educators and parents. It is designed to enhance student learning both before and after the performance, to support your classroom lesson plans and deepen the educational value of your students' experience. The information and classroom activities in this study guide support Idaho State Department of Education Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy for grades 3-8.

Thank you for the sharing the magic of performing arts with your students!

- Company of Fools





# HOW TO BE A GREAT AUDIENCE

Live theatre productions are exciting and vibrant. Actors, audience, and backstage technicians are all part of the experience. As audience members, your students will play an important role in the overall atmosphere of the performance.

To ensure that everyone has a great time at the theatre, please share the following expectations with your students:

- Please remain seated throughout the entire performance.
- Try not to rock back and forth in your seats. They can—and sometimes do—break.
- Restroom visits are best made before leaving school. The theatre's restroom facilities are very limited. **Shipwrecked!** is 70-80 minutes in length with no intermission (a 10-minute Q&A session will follow the performance).
- Lights Out = Quiet Time! When the lights in the theatre dim to blackout, this is the signal that the performance is about to begin.
- Please do not talk or whisper during the performance. You might think whispering during the show is okay. But if everyone in the audience whispers, it will be disruptive to the performers.
- Do not drink, eat, or chew gum during the performance.
- Turn cell phones to the "silent" setting. And absolutely no texting.
- Keep your feet on the floor, not on the seat in front of you.

We hope you and your students will enjoy your visit to the Liberty Theatre!

**Teacher Tip:** Spark conversation with your students by asking them to remember a time when they were in an audience. Was it a great audience or were there distractions? Have students make their own criteria for what a GREAT audience is and have them share their thoughts.

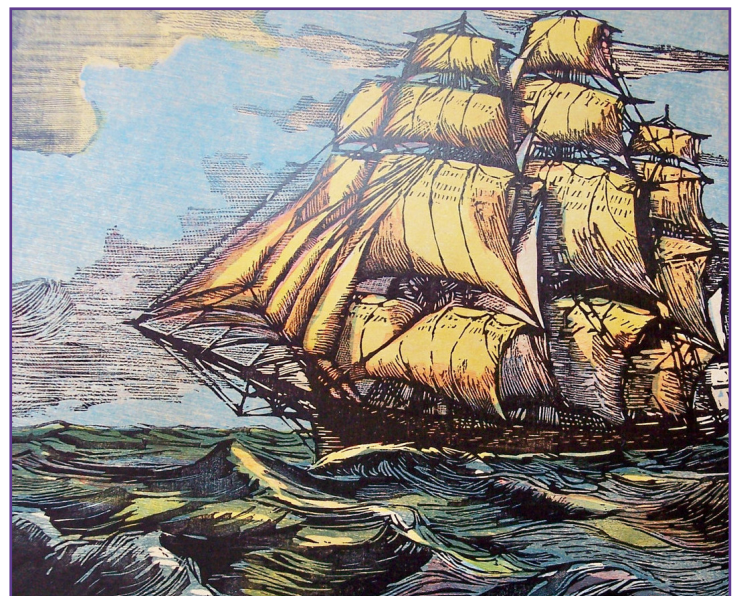
## PLAY SYNOPSIS

"I'm about to tell you a story. A fantastic and amazing story! A story all the more remarkable because every word of it is true." So begins **Shipwrecked! An Entertainment**. From there, we are drawn into Louis' world. We see him as a sheltered young boy, engrossed in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Arabian Nights*. That young boy grows into a restless young man who takes his first step towards independence. He leaves his home at the age of sixteen, bound for Australia on a pearling expedition.

The journey is arduous but the outlook is bright. Until a great storm arises and the ship is capsized. All the men, save Louis, are drowned. Days later, Louis (along with the ship's dog Bruno) washes up on dry land. He is safe but alone.

From there, his story grows more fantastic. He does gymnastics on the beach to pass the time. He rides on the backs of sea turtles. He meets and marries an Aboriginal woman, visits her tribe and is made their king. He longs for home and eventually is rescued. Thirty years after leaving London, he returns home.

Upon his return, Louis sells his amazing story to *Wide World Magazine* and becomes an overnight celebrity. His hero status is threatened when people begin to question his claims. Are Louis' adventures real or just a figment of his imagination? Did he really do all those amazing things? Will Louis' be vindicated or will his reputation be sullied forever?



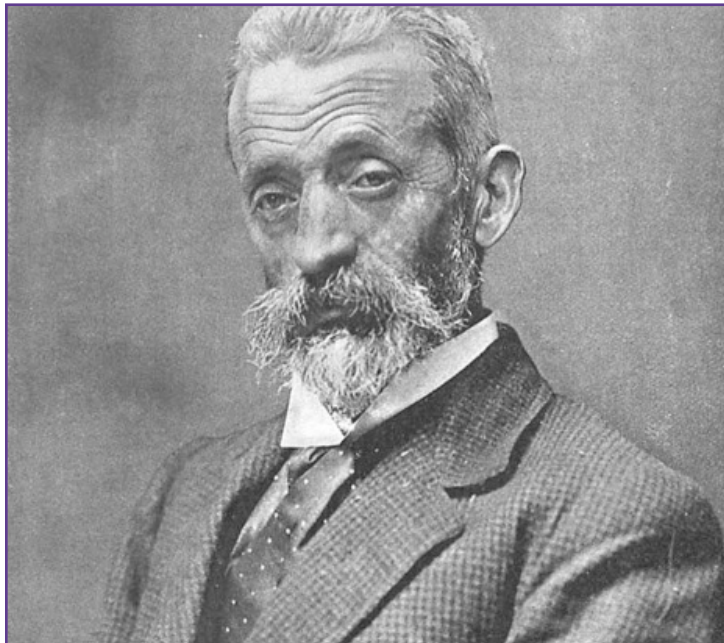
# THE “REAL” LOUIS DE ROUGEMONT

In 1898, Louis de Rougemont burst into the British news with an amazing story of 30 years of adventure in the Australian Outback. However, de Rougemont's tales proved too incredible for some, and newspapers began to investigate his background. What they discovered shocked the public: Louis de Rougemont was not the man he claimed to be!

Louis de Rougemont was really Henri Louis Grien, a poor Swiss immigrant to Australia. Originally the butler to the Lieutenant-Governor of Western Australia (at whose dinner parties Grien overheard detailed accounts of Outback expeditions), Henri Louis settled down in Sydney. There, he started a family and attempted various money-making schemes such as marketing a faulty deep-diving suit. He also continued to collect adventure stories.

After one too many failed enterprises, Grien quit Australia for London and spent his days at the British Museum reading books on the Australian Outback and the South Pacific. Months later, he appeared at *The Wide World Magazine* with a new name – Louis de Rougemont – and his amazing tales would rocket him to stardom.

Grien's fame was his downfall – his abandoned family and duped customers recognized his picture in the newspaper and came forward with accounts of the real Louis. Though publicly discredited, Grien continued to appear in theatres as Louis de Rougemont, offering demonstrations of his turtle-riding skills as proof of his authenticity. Interest in de Rougemont soon waned, and Grien disappeared from the public eye. In 1921, he died a beggar, going by yet another name: Louis Redmond.



## THE PLAYWRIGHT DONALD MARGULIES

Born in 1954, Donald Margulies is a playwright from Brooklyn, New York. His love of theatre was fostered early on by his father who, despite his low income, found a way to take his children to see plays and musicals on Broadway.

As he grew so did his love for the arts. Margulies obtained a degree in Visual Arts from Purchase College, but after a few years decided that he would rather pursue a career in writing. So, he enrolled in a post-graduate program in New York. However, his post-graduate career was short lived, lasting only eight weeks. He chose instead to join play writing groups such as Writers Bloc, and it paid off.

In 1982 Margulies collaborated on an off-off Broadway production at the Jewish Repertory Theatre. Two years later he collaborated on an off Broadway production called *Found a Peanut*, produced by The Public Theatre. Then in 1992, Margulies's own *Sight Unseen* won an Obie award for Best American Play. Since that he has won a Pulitzer Prize for *Dinner With Friends*; and his work has been performed across The United States and overseas. Currently, Margulies lives in New Haven, Connecticut and is a professor at the Yale University.



# MARGULIES ON SHIPWRECKED!

"Louis de Rougemont was a man who claimed to have survived in the outback for 30 years after being shipwrecked. He eventually returned to society, where he told his story of heroics publicly and in print, and became a celebrity—until the story began to unravel. Various anthropologists and oceanographers began to find clues in his text that pointed to fabrication, and slowly his story fell apart until he was basically disgraced. The debunking is one of the things that fascinated me; the tale he told is so captivating that it raises the question, "How significant is it that it was made up when the pleasure of the journey was so powerful?" I think that's an interesting question. It was then that, for me, **Shipwrecked!** became a story about the power of story-telling. It also became a way to celebrate theater, to do what theater does better than spectacle, film or multimillion-dollar musicals: to simply get back to the essence of telling a good story."



## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Despite the many characters found in **Shipwrecked!**, our production uses only four actors (who portray Louis, Player #1, Player #2 and Player #3).

**Louis de Rougemont**, played by Adrian Rieder, the main storyteller we follow from boyhood through old age, as he reenacts a life filled with amazing adventures

**Player #1** — played by Jana Arnold  
is Louis' Mother, Fitzgerald, Wombat Expert, etc.

**Player #2** — played by Andrew Alburger  
is Capt. Jensen, Queen Victoria, Gunda, etc.

**Player #3** — played by Suzanne Gray  
is Yamba, Bruno, Newsboy, etc.



## QUESTIONS

### BEFORE YOU SEE THE PLAY

Consider asking your students the following questions for discussion:

1. Have you ever wanted to drop everything and go on an adventure? Where? How long? With whom?
2. Would you ever want to visit a foreign place where you didn't speak the language? Why? If you already have, how did it feel?
3. Everyone is an expert at something. What are you an expert at and why? How long did it take you to consider yourself an expert? Do you know anyone who's an expert at something else?

### AFTER YOU SEE THE PLAY

Consider asking your students the following questions for discussion:

1. Do you believe that Louis actually did go on his adventure? Why or why not? Can you think of a time when someone didn't believe you? How did it make you feel?
2. Did the theatrical elements of the show make his story believable? If so, how?
3. Could you ever leave your family for 30 years like Louis did? If so, how would you stay in contact?

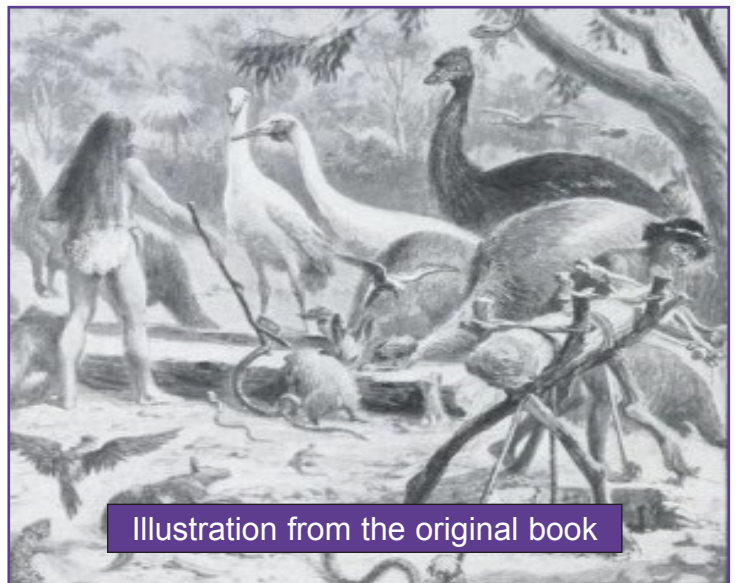


Illustration from the original book

# SHIPWRECKED! ACTIVITIES

## CREATE AN ISLAND THEMED TERRARIUM (grades 3 - 5)

### Materials Needed

- A clear glass container with a wide neck to allow your hand in
- Small stones or gravel
- Activated charcoal (get from pet store)
- Potting soil
- Small sponge
- Piece of screen, mesh, or cheesecloth
- Plants or moss

### Directions

A terrarium is a completely self-supporting ecosystem. The plant life replenishes the air with oxygen, light shining through provides the light and power source, and water comes from the moisture in the soil. As the dead leaves fall off, they decompose providing food for the soil. How to make one:

1. Select your plants. They should be small, like shade, and not grow too fast or too tall.
2. Put gravel on terrarium floor.
3. Sprinkle a small amount of activated charcoal on top.
4. Cover with a piece of screen with a slit cut in the middle.
5. Slice the sponge to one third inch wide and stick it in like a candle between the slit in the screen and anchor it in the gravel. The sponge will bring moisture up to the plant roots.
6. Cover with potting soil.
7. Gently make small holes and place plants in them, packing the soil loosely around them.
8. Spritz your plants with water and cover. Add small "island themed" figures.
9. Your terrarium may look a little limp for a few days but will get used to its new environment in no time.

## ADVENTURE "PHOTOS!" (grades 3 - 8)

To get started: Assign one player to be the tourist and the others to be the "photos." Have the Tourist choose an adventure (i.e. going to the Amazon or the Grand Canyon). Once the adventure is decided, the other players write down a list of 5 to 7 "photos" to depict it -- without discussing them with the Tourist. For example if it is an Amazon adventure than photo #1 could be of the players being chased by monkeys, photo #2 -- crossing a river and so forth.

To play: With the tourist watching, the other players create a "photo" from their list. The Tourist then uses their imagination to describe what's going on. When they're done narrating, they say "click," and the photo changes to their next photo. After the "photos" are done compare the tourist's INTERPRETATION of the photos with the actual list.

## SHIPWRECK YOURSELF (grades 5 - 8)

Pretend that you are going to be shipwrecked, and make a list of what you think are the most important conditions to have in place. To get started: What year would you be shipwrecked? Where in the world (or out of this world) would you be shipwrecked? What three items would you bring? Who would you want with you? What other circumstances would you choose to control?

## WIDE WORLD ARTICLE (grades 5 - 8)

*The Wide World Magazine* told stories of travel, adventure and intrigue. Cover stories for the magazine included "How I Was Buried Alive" and Aquanauts of Inner Space." Write a one-page article for *The Wide World Magazine* that involves adventure and excitement. Illustrate your article and "publish" it by distributing the story or compilation of class stories the other classes!





# GLOSSARY

A Glossary of Words and Phrases Found in the Play

**Aborigines:** native inhabitants of Australia.

**Alienist:** a physician who has been accepted by a court of law as an expert on the mental competence of witnesses appearing before it.

**Cannibal:** a person who eats humans.

**Catamaran:** a raft of logs or floats lashed together and propelled by paddles or sails.

**Charlatan:** a person who claims to possess knowledge or skills that they do not really have; a quack.

**Delusions of grandeur:** believing that one is greater, more powerful and/or more influential than one actually is. Delusions are associated with mental illness.

**Great Barrier Reef:** the largest reef in the world, off the coast of Australia in the Coral Sea. It is over 1,400 miles long and has an area of approximately 216,542 square miles. A reef is a large strip of coral, sand or rock that rises to or above the surface of the ocean.

**Hoi polloi:** the common people, the masses.

**Hubris:** overbearing pride.

**Ignominious:** marked by shame or disgrace.

**Madame Tussauds:** a British museum founded in the early nineteenth century that features startlingly life-like wax studies of celebrities.

**piece de resistance:** the most important or remarkable feature.

**Royal Geographic Society:** a British society for advancement of geography founded in 1830. Originally a gentleman's dinner club, the society was given a royal charter by Queen Victoria in 1859 and soon became responsible for bringing geography into schools and making it an academic subject. The Society also sponsored colonial exploration as well as famous expeditions by explorers such as Livingstone (Africa), Shackleton (Antarctica), and Hillary (Mt. Everest).

**Rudyard Kipling:** English author of novels and poetry who was born in India (1865-1936)

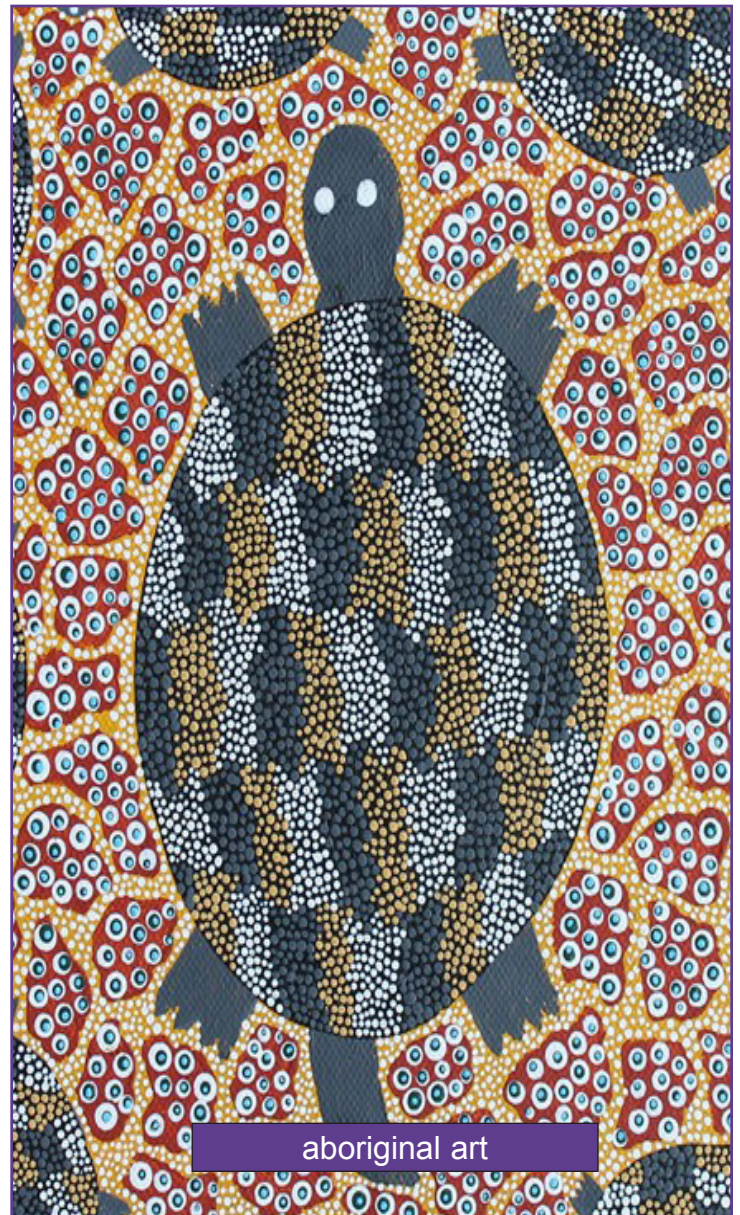
**Serial:** a novel or story published in installments (usually chapters).

**Thames:** the longest river in England; flows eastward through London to the North Sea

**The Wide World Magazine:** a monthly British magazine published from 1898-1965 that featured true-life adventure stories including serialized adventures of Louis de Rougemont. The magazine's motto was "*Truth is stranger than fiction.*"

**Topiary:** the art or practice of clipping shrubs or trees into ornamental shapes.

**Wombat:** an Australian marsupial resembling a small bear.



aboriginal art



# FREE ONLINE ADVENTURE GAMES & CONTESTS

Kids National Geographic's Interactive Adventure Games -

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/games/interactiveadventures/>

Scholastic – This site has adventure games and writing contests that feature adventures!!!

<http://www.scholastic.com/home/>

## LEARN MORE ONLINE!

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/de-rougemont-louis-5961>

- The Real Louis de Rougemont

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre\\_in\\_the\\_Victorian\\_era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_in_the_Victorian_era)

- Theatre in the Victorian Era

<http://www.victorianweb.org/>

- The Victorian Era

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Wide\\_World\\_Magazine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wide_World_Magazine)

- The World Wide Magazine

<http://sunvalleycenter.org/companyoffools/current-season/>

- Company of Fools events!

<https://www.facebook.com/CompanyofFools?fref=ts>

- Like Company of Fools on Facebook!



## IF YOU LIKED SHIPWRECKED! CHECK OUT:

### LITERATURE

**Imposters** by Sarah Burton

**Robinson Crusoe** by Daniel DeFoe

**The Odyssey** by Homer

**Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage**

by Alfred Lansing

**Life of Pi** by Yann Martel

**The Adventures of Louis de Rougemont**

by Lois de Rougemont

**In Search of Robison Crusoe** by Tim Servrin

**The Tempest** by William Shakespeare

**Twelfth Night** by William Shakespeare

**Swiss Family Robinson** by Johann David Wyss

### FILM/TV

**Cast Away** (2000)

**Gilligan's Island** (1964)

**Land of the Lost** (TV Series 1974 & 1991, Film 2009)

**Lost in Space** (1998)

**Robinson Crusoe** (1997)

**Star Wars** (1977)

**The Never Ending Story** (1984)

**Up** (2009)





# WRITE A REVIEW OF SHIPWRECKED!

1. Include your name, grade and school.
2. What remains in your memory from the play that you saw?
3. How did the designers make the performance more exciting? (think about the set, lights, sounds, costumes and props)
4. Who were your favorite characters and why?
5. Compare and contrast the themes of the play to an adventure movie or the short story.
6. Give your review a headline.

## **Send your review of SHIPWRECKED! to:**

Company of Fools  
P.O. Box 656  
Sun Valley, Idaho 83353



# TEACHER FEEDBACK: SHIPWRECKED!

1. Did using the Study Guide add to your theatre experience?
  - a. YES
  - b. SOME
  - c. NO
2. How much of the Study Guide did you read?
  - a. Didn't have time
  - b. About a quarter
  - c. All
3. What do you think of what you read?  
(Mark as many as apply)
  - a. Useful
  - b. Nothing New
  - c. Enjoyable
  - d. Not for my students because \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you get the Study Guide in time to prepare your students to see the play?
  - a. YES
  - b. NO
5. What sections of the Study Guide did you find most important? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How did the experience of preparing for and then seeing the play impact your students? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Did you spend more time working with the material BEFORE or AFTER you saw the play?
8. Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE FAX THIS TO 788-1053  
or Mail to Company of Fools,  
P. O. Box 656, Sun Valley, Idaho 83353

