

0. Settling into African Life - Story Preface

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Albert hired a former patient—Joseph, "a Galoa"—as his assistant. Joseph was invaluable in helping Albert and Helene understand the African way of thinking, and he gave them advice about native psychology and culture. For example, Albert noticed that his patients would not eat the hospital food. Joseph explained that food poisoning was very common in the jungle and the natives were certain that their enemies slipped poison into their food.

Albert knew this was a serious problem. He arranged for outdoor-cooking areas to be built outside of the hospital so that the patient's family could prepare the patient's food. These cooking fireplaces remain, at the hospital, to this day.

Joseph also taught Albert and Helene that the natives believed in magic charms, taboos and curses—and—that these strong beliefs had a huge psychological effect on them. The beliefs were so strong that they sometimes endangered their health and even their lives.

Rather than trying to change the endemic culture, Albert and Helene tried to understand it so they could better serve their patients.

The natives soon began to trust, respect and love the Schweitzers. They knew Albert and Helene cared about them and respected them.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Settling-into-African-Life-Albert-Schweitzer>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Albert Schweitzer

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