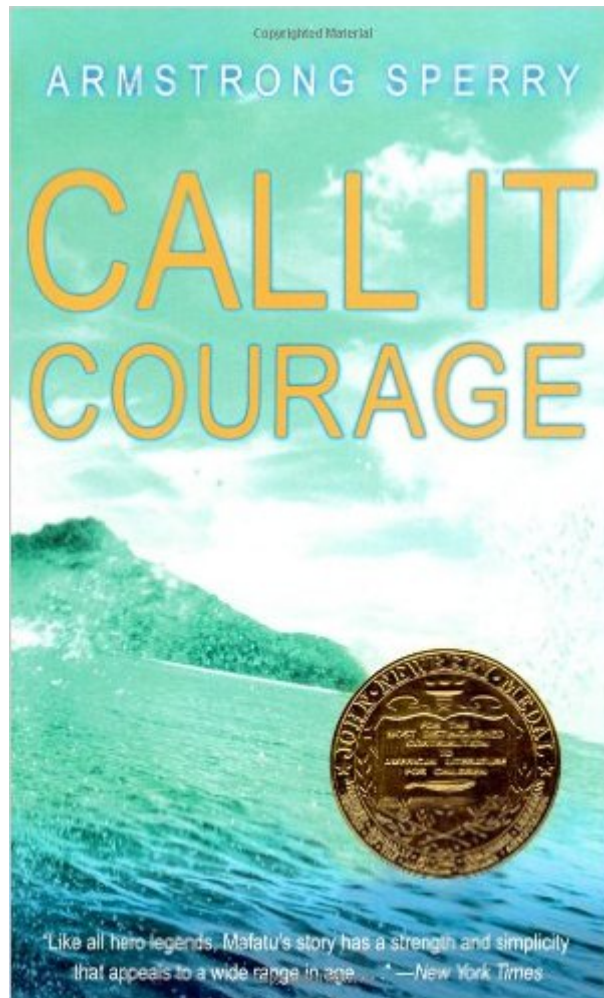


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# Call It Courage



## Synopsis

Mafatu has been afraid of the sea for as long as he can remember. Though his father is the Great Chief of Hikueru - an island whose seafaring people worship courage - Mafatu feels like an outsider. All his life he has been teased, taunted, and even blamed for storms on the sea. Then at age fifteen, no longer willing to put up with the ridicule and jibes, Mafatu decides to take his fate into his own hands. With his dog, Uri, as his companion, Mafatu paddles out to sea, ready to face his fears. What he learns on his lonesome adventure will change him forever and make him a hero in the eyes of his people.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 830L (What's this?)

Mass Market Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Simon Pulse; Reprint edition (January 29, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 141695368X

ISBN-13: 978-1416953685

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.4 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (195 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #20,707 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) [#1 in](#) Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discovery [#5 in](#) Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discoveries [#38 in](#) Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Esteem & Reliance

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Mafatu, the ten-year-old son of a Polynesian chieftan, has always feared the sea because in his toddlerhood he and his mother were swept away by a storm in which his mother lost her life. As he approaches the edge of manhood, his fear prevents him from winning a place in his community. Realizing their indifference to him, he sets out to sea alone in his canoe, taking only his dog and a few tools. That night he is caught in a storm, in which he loses his paddle and all his tools, and he washes up on an island where cannibals are known to live. He builds a shelter and canoe and chooses to survive; while living there he kills an octopus, a boar, and a shark, and faces the human

terror of ritualistic cannibals, barely escaping with his life. At the end of his journey he returns to his village having proved himself a man. The story is set in a mythical Polynesia, but is written in a European voice: at one point the author describes a canoe caught in a current "like a millrace," a term which is decidedly foreign to this island culture. The great weakness of this book is that the tribal societies which provide a backdrop for the story are caricatured: The tribal fishermen represent noble savages, living so close to nature that they become "ill at ease, charged... with an almost animal awareness of impending storm" (3). Conversely, the cannibal tribe represent a class of wordless, brutal primitives -- dancing with oiled bodies, beating drums around fires and stone idols, wailing, and shouting with guttural voices. Mafatu appeals throughout the story to Maui, "god of the Fishermen," and repeatedly challenges his nemesis Moana, the Sea God.

This is a golden classic piece of children's literature that EVERYONE should read at least once, and this text is quite good. In this story, the Polynesian boy, Mafatu, who has always been afraid of the sea -- a serious handicap for a child who lives on an island, and amidst a people who worship courage -- goes forth, alone, with only his pet dog and albatross, in a stolen canoe and makes his way to a deserted island to prove his courage against the sea creatures, the animals on the land (wild boars, for instance), and the sea itself. And, overshadowing all, is Mafatu's one terrible discovery -- the island he is currently on is a sacred ritual meeting place for cannibals! Can Mafatu prove himself, construct a new canoe (the one he had was destroyed on the coral reef and lost in the storm which shipwrecked him on the island) and flee before the dreaded "eaters-of-men" return to exact their terrible revenge upon him for profaning their "motu tabu" -- the Forbidden Island? --- There are a few typo's (very few, and very far between) -- a "runtogether" word on occasion, for example, or the word "galaxies" spelled with two "l"s ("gallaxies"), and the like. But otherwise, really excellent. My main complaint with this Kindle version -- and the only reason I only gave it four stars instead of five -- is that apart from the front and back covers, THIS BOOK IS NOT ILLUSTRATED in any way whatsoever. In PRINTED versions, there are at least TWO possible sets of drawings for this book, depending on which illustrator is doing whichever printed version you have (I believe one set was done by Mr. Armstrong Sperry himself); both sets are REALLY excellent; and neither one is included in this Kindle edition.

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