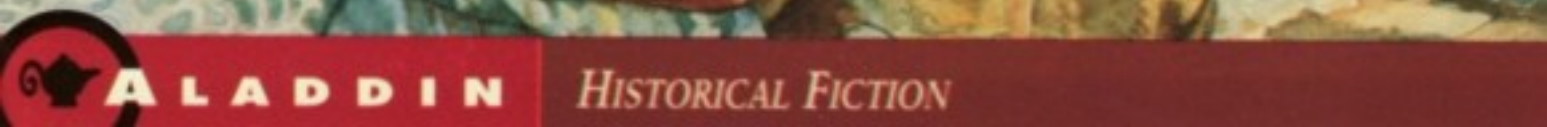


WINNER OF THE NEWBERY MEDAL



CALL IT COURAGE

Armstrong Sperry



HISTORICAL FICTION



1. FLIGHT



IT HAPPENED many years ago, before the traders and missionaries first came into the South Seas, while the Polynesians were still great in numbers and fierce of heart. But even today the people of Hikueru sing this story in their chants and tell it over the evening fires. It is the story of Mafatu, the Boy Who Was Afraid.

They worshiped courage, those early Polynesians. The spirit which had urged them across the Pacific in their sailing canoes, before the dawn of recorded history, not knowing where they were going nor caring what their

fate might be, still sang its song of danger in their blood. There was only courage. A man who was afraid—what place had he in their midst? And the boy Mafatu—son of Tavana Nui, the Great Chief of Hikueru—always had been afraid. So the people drove him forth. Not by violence, but by indifference.

Mafatu went out alone to face the thing he feared the most. And the people of Hikueru still sing his story in their chants and tell it over the evening fires.

It was the sea that Mafatu feared. He had been surrounded by it ever since he was born. The thunder of it filled his ears; the crash of it upon the reef, the mutter of it at sunset, the threat and fury of its storms—on every hand, wherever he turned—the sea.

He could not remember when the fear of it first had taken hold of him. Perhaps it was during the great hurricane which swept Hikueru when he was a child of three. Even now, twelve years later, Mafatu could remember that terrible morning. His mother had taken him out to the barrier-reef to search for sea urchins in the reef pools. There were other canoes scattered at wide intervals along the reef. With late afternoon the other fishermen began to turn back. They shouted warnings to Mafatu's mother. It was the season of hurricane and the people of Hikueru were nervous and ill at ease, charged, it seemed, with an almost animal awareness of impending storm.

But when at last Mafatu's mother turned back toward shore, a swift current had set in around the shoulder of the reef-passage: a meeting of tides that swept like a millrace out into the open sea. It seized the frail craft in its swift race. Despite all the woman's skill, the canoe was carried on the crest of the churning tide, through the reef-passage, into the outer ocean.

Mafatu would never forget the sound of his mother's despairing cry. He didn't know then what it meant; but he felt that something was terribly wrong, and he set up a loud wailing. Night closed down upon them, swift as a frigate's wing, darkening the known world. The wind of the open ocean rushed in at them, screaming. Waves lifted and struck at one another, their crests hissing with spray. The poles of the outrigger were torn from their thwarts. The woman sprang forward to seize her child as the canoe capsized. The little boy gasped when the cold water struck him. He clung to his mother's neck. Moana, the Sea God, was reaching up for them, seeking to draw them down to his dark heart. . . .

Off the tip of Hikueru, the uninhabited islet of Tekoto lay shrouded in darkness. It was scarcely more than a ledge of coral, almost awash. The swift current bore directly down upon the islet.

Dawn found the woman still clinging to the *purau* pole and the little boy with his arms locked about his mother's neck. The grim light revealed sharks circling, circling. . . . Little Mafatu buried his head against his mother's cold

The John Newbery Medal has been awarded annually since 1922, under the supervision of the American Library Association, to books that are considered the most distinguished contributions to literature for children.

CALL IT COURAGE

Mafatu's name means "Stout Heart," but his people call him a coward. Ever since the sea took his mother's life and spared his own, he has lived with deep fear. And even though his father is the Great Chief of Hikueru—an island whose seafaring people worship courage—he is terrified, and so scorned.

By the time he is fifteen years old, Mafatu can bear it no longer. He must conquer his fear alone...even if it means certain death.

This classic tale of a young boy's hidden strength has been a favorite of readers of all ages since its 1940 publication—and this handsome new edition preserves its original illustrations in all their beauty.

"Like all hero legends Mafatu's story has a strength and simplicity...it is beautifully told." —*The New York Times*

ARMSTRONG SPERRY (1897-1976) is the author of many books for young readers, including *All Sail Set*, *Lost Lagoon*, and *Hull-Down for Action*.

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