

Call It Courage

Study Guide Key

About Author: Armstrong Sperry (1897-1976) is author of many books including *All Sail Set*, *Lost Lagoon*, and *Hull-Down for Action*.

Before Reading Book

This book is a legend, a story told by Polynesians. It is the story of a boy who is afraid of the sea. But he overcomes his fear to become a brave and courageous boy. Why do you think the Polynesian people tell this story?

In the story, *Call It Courage*, a twelve-year old boy (Mafatu) must face his fear, fear of the sea. Everyone is afraid of something. Write about a time when you were afraid. (e.g., fear of flying, heights, alone, darkness, water)

Chapter 1 (pp. 7-17)

1. How did the people treat Mafatu, the boy who was afraid? (drove him away with indifference)
2. What was Mafatu's fear? (fear of the sea)
3. When did Mafatu begin to fear the sea? (at 3 years old, clung to neck of dead mother in hurricane)
4. What did Mafatu see in his dreams? (faces of fishermen who found him and his dead mother on the shore)
5. Why did Mafatu's father fear for him? (couldn't live up to his name, Stout Heart, when afraid)
6. How was Mafatu treated by other children?(girls teased and boys wouldn't play with him)
7. Why couldn't Mafatu go fishing with other boys?(afraid, so stayed home and did girls work such as mending nets?)
8. Who were Mafatu's only real friends? (Uri, his dog and Kivi, the albatross)
9. How did young boys of the island become important? (killed bonitos fish)
10. How did Kana try to get Mafatu to go fishing with him? (called it fun)
12. What was the feeling of the tribe toward Mafatu that Kana told everyone? (coward)
13. How would Mafatu plan to prove himself? (face his fear of the sea)
14. Why was Mafatu planning to leave the island?(prove himself)
15. Why didn't Mafatu turn back to the island in his canoe?(heard Kana's voice)
16. How did Kivi, his albatross, help him?(guided him safely away from the island)

Chapter 2: The Sea (pp. 21-34)

1. Why didn't Mafatu have to paddle the canoe in the open sea? (ocean current)
2. What sea animals did Mafatu see in the ocean? (whale, dolphin, flying fish)
3. How did Mafatu get food and water at sea? (green drinking nut)
4. How did Mafatu ride out the storm? (he paddled)
5. What did Mafatu lose in the storm?(drinking nuts, spear and knife)
6. Even when Mafatu thought Uri and he were going to die at sea, who appeared? (Kivi)
7. What was the shadow on the horizon? (land)
8. How was the island Mafatu landed on different than Hikeuru? (peaked, not flat)
9. How did Mafatu get to the island? (swam)
10. How could they survive on the island? How would you survive alone on an island? (water)
11. What are Pandanus? (bread fruit trees)

Chapter 3: The Island (pp.35-54)

1. Once Mafatu drank water on the island what did he need next? (food)
2. Why didn't he eat coconuts?(too weak to climb)
3. Think about Mafatu's needs on the island. Rank these needs from 1-4: fire, people, water, and food. Write about how you would satisfy each of these needs if you were Mafatu.
4. Why didn't people on the island find Mafatu? (uninhabited)
5. How do you think the island was formed? Try making a volcano. (volcano)
6. Why did Mafatu need lime juice and leaves?(heal wound)
7. If no people lived on the island, how do you think the trail got there? (wild pigs and goats)
8. Why wouldn't Mafatu have to worry about food on the island? (Bread fruit, bananas, oranges, guavas, and mangoes)
9. Why was Mafatu hoping for and at the same time fearing people on the island? (friends or enemies)
10. Why did Mafatu think there might be people on the island 50 miles away? (smoke)
11. How did Mafatu plan to kill the wild boar? (spear)
12. How would Mafatu ever get back home?(make tamanu canoe)
13. What was Mafatu's vow? (return home)
14. How did the banana leaves get cut? (knife)
15. Who made this trail through the jungle?(people)
16. Why do you think there were human bones around the statue? (human sacrifice)

17. What is a **Amarae**? (idol) Make a model of a **Amarae** out of clay.
18. Why did Mafatu touch the statue? (needed spearhead) What evil things do you think Mafatu thought might happen to him because he touched the statue?
19. Why did Mafatu celebrate touching the statue? (victory over fear)
20. How did Mafatu make a fire? (firestick)
21. How did Mafatu control his thoughts of loneliness? (thought of other things)
22. How would Mafatu make a knife? (shell)
23. What was Mafatu's greatest fear? (eaters of men returning)
24. Why did food taste so good to Mafatu? (famished)
25. Why did Mafatu sleep well? (found courage)

Chapter 4: Drums (pp.55-79)

1. Why do you think this chapter is titled drums? (people) Make a drum from a coffee can or oatmeal box.
2. Why did Mafatu bank the fire? (keep it alive)
3. What skills did Mafatu have that helped him survive on the island? (make nets, knife, shark lines, implements, and shell fish hooks) What survival skills do you have to survive on a deserted island?
4. How did Mafatu make a dug-out canoe? (tamanu tree hollowed out by fire) Try making a model of Mafatu's canoe.
5. Why did Mafatu need a raft more than a canoe? (set fish trap on reef) Try making a raft using popsicle sticks.
6. Why was killing a boar as important as a canoe to Mafatu? (with boar's tooth necklace, his tribe would know his strength and courage)
7. Tell how you know Kivi, the albatross, and Uri, his dog, liked the island. (played)
8. How did Mafatu finally make clothes? (mulberry fiber)
9. Why was Mafatu happy to find the whale skeleton? (make knives, fish hooks, dars, spears and ax)
10. Why didn't Mafatu get anything out of his fish trap? (shark or octopus ate it)
11. How did Mafatu treat his dog? (like a person)
12. How did the hammer head shark get sea animals out of Mafatu's fish trap? (shook the trap **As a terrier might shake a rat**.)
13. Why was Mafatu forced to fight the shark? (save Uri)
14. How did Mafatu wound the shark? (stabbed it)
15. Draw the canoe on page 65, paragraph one. (15 feet long, 3 feet deep, 1 foot wide)
16. Why did Mafatu climb the flat rock to his look out each day? (check for eaters-of-men)

17. How did Mafatu defend himself against the charging wild boar? (spear)
18. How did Mafatu feel after killing the wild boar?(fearless)
19. What did Mafatu do with the wild boar?(ate the meat, and made necklace with teeth)
20. Now that Mafatu's canoe was done, what must he do? (return home)
21. How did Mafatu's canoe work in water? (well)
22. How did Mafatu feel about the sea in his new canoe? (fearless)
23. What didn't Mafatu do that day that he did every other day?(check lookout)
How could that be a problem for him? (savages may return)
24. What could Mafatu see in the clear reef water? (Cod, coral, mullet, arrowheads)
25. What was in his fish trap? (3 lobster)
26. Why did Mafatu dive feet-first into the water? (lost knife)
27. Why did Mafatu have to fight for his life?(octopus grabbed him)
28. Who is the author talking about when he says, *Alay like a broken shadow* (octopus) and felt like a man drowning in ice cold water (Mafatu)?
29. When would Mafatu start home? (tomorrow)
30. How did Mafatu pack for the trip home? (fresh water, bananas, drinking nuts)
31. What was the thump-thump, thump Mafatu heard? (eaters-of-men)

Chapter 5: Homeward (pp. 80-95)

1. Why did Mafatu climb back up to the flat-rock lookout? (see who was coming)
2. Draw the scene that forever burned in Mafatu's memory?(6 war canoes and savages dancing around the stone idol)
3. Why must Mafatu flee? (savages)
4. Why didn't the savages get him?(out ran and out paddled them)
5. Why did Mafatu still hear the thump-thump, thump?(savages followed him in their canoes)
6. How many savages followed him?
7. Why were the savages getting closer to Mafatu's canoe? (6x10=60)
8. What guided the canoe safely back to Hikueru?(followed 3 stars)
9. Why was it finally safe to sleep at sea?(savages gave up)
10. Why didn't storms come, just endless days at sea?(storm season passed)
11. Now, what dangerous creatures followed Mafatu at sea?(tiger sharks)
12. Alone at sea, how did Mafatu feel about the gods?(Maui deserted him, and Moana wanted to kill him)
13. Who else was in the canoe with Mafatu? (Uri, his dog)
14. How did Mafatu know Hikueru Island lay ahead? (Kivi, the albatross)
15. What did Mafatu say to his father?(My father, I have come home)
16. How did his father react? (brave name, Stout heart, for brave boy)

17. How did you like the ending to the book? Write a different ending to the story.

After Reading the Book

1. List all the events in the book that could have happened in one column. Then list all the events you think couldn't have happened in another column.
2. Explain why this story is fiction not fact.
3. The author tells about the main character in the third person (e.g., he and him), as if he is telling the reader a story. Think of other stories you know (e.g, The Black Sisters, Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone). Write that story as if you were telling it to someone.
4. How did the attitude of his tribe toward Mafatu change from the beginning of the book to the end of the book?
5. Why would Mafatu's story be a good story to tell young boys in a Polynesian tribe?

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6. How was Mafatu treated by other children? Have you ever been treated badly by other children?
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