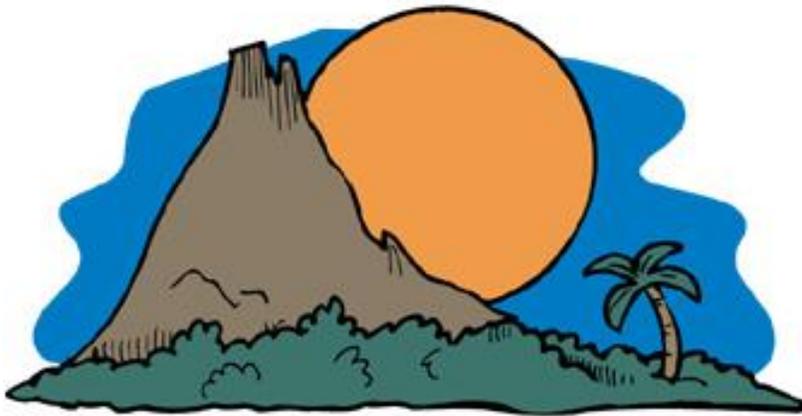


Sample Pages from

Call It Courage

by Armstrong Sperry

1941 Newbery Medal Winner



A Novel Teaching Pack

by Margaret Whisnant

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Chapter Summaries

1. *Flight*

- Mafatu, christened Stout Heart by his proud father Tavana Nui, the Great Chief of Hikueru, lives in a time long before traders and missionaries came to the Polynesian islands of the South Seas.
- As a child of three, Mafatu survives a storm that takes his mother's life. He is left with a fear of the sea in a society that worships courage.
- Unable to overcome his fear, Mafatu senses his father's shame. Eventually he is not allowed to accompany the other fishermen. He stays at home making spears and nets.
- Mafatu's constant companions are Uri, a yellow dog, and Kivi, an albatross he rescued as a fledgling.
- The time for the young boys' hunting of the bonitos returns, but Mafatu's overwhelming terror of the sea prevents him from joining them.
- In the dark of night, a hidden Mafatu listens to the boys speak of their impending adventure. He overhears Kana, the only boy who has been friendly toward him, call him a coward.
- A resentful Mafatu decides to leave for an island to the south where he will prove his courage among strangers and then return to his own island with his head held high in pride.
- Mafatu leaves Hikueru in an outrigger canoe with a few supplies, Uri, and Kivi flying overhead.

2. *The Sea*

- Beyond the reef, Mafatu's canoe rides on a current that the Ancients called Paths of the Sea, the same currents that carried the Polynesians from island to island long ago.
- Kivi leaves sight of Mafatu's canoe for the freedom of the skies.
- A gathering storm brings wind, lightning, and a surging sea that snaps the sail and mast from Mafatu's canoe.
- A huge wave crashes into Mafatu's craft and takes his string of drinking nuts, his fish spear, his knife, and the fiber clothing from his body.
- In the hot sun the day after the storm, Mafatu's body blisters and cracks as his canoe moves swiftly without human guidance along the current.
- Just as Mafatu is gaining courage to die, Kivi reappears from the sky and leads him onward. Finally he spots land in the distance—an island with a mountain.
- Mafatu wonders if the westward current could have brought him to one of the terrible dark islands of the eaters-of-men.
- During the night Mafatu's canoe is broken apart in the boiling surf that thunders against the island's barrier reef, but Mafatu is flung into the calm water on the other side of the reef and manages to swim ashore.
- Mafatu collapses after he crawls across the beach and finds fresh water at the edge of a jungle.
- Uri drags himself across the beach to his master's side.

3. *The Island*

- Mafatu thinks of the fire he must make, the shelter he must build, and the search he must make for any people who might be living on the island.
- Realizing he is not on Tahiti, Mafatu again wonders if his silent island belongs to the black eaters-of-men.
- Mafatu finds that the slopes of the volcanic peak forming the island are covered with vegetation, including fruit trees and trails made by wild pigs and goats.
- Mafatu discovers a high plateau from which he can survey the entire island and many miles of sea as well.
- From his vantage point on the plateau, Mafatu spots a distant cone-shaped island with a column of smoke rising from the cone. Mafatu remembers Grandfather Ruau's stories of the Smoking Islands that were the homes of the eaters-of-men

Vocabulary Lists with Definitions

(Arranged in Story Order)

(Some words can be found on more than one page.)

Set One: 1. *Flight*

- indifference** Lack of interest or concern. (p. 8)
- intervals** Spaces between two objects, points, or units; the amount of time between specified instances or events. (p. 8)
- impending** About to happen; imminent; threatening to happen; menacing. (p. 8)
- frail** Easily broken or destroyed; weak; having delicate health; fragile. (p. 9)
- despairing** Hopeless; characterized by a loss of hope; filled with a sense of futility or defeat. (p. 9)
- capsized** Overturned or caused to overturn. (p. 9)
- shrouded** Wrapped, shielded, or concealed from sight; wrapped in a burial cloth. (p. 9)
- pinnacle** A lofty peak; any pointed, towering part or formation, as of rock or a mountain peak; the highest or culminating point, as of success, power, or fame. (p. 10)
- christened** Given a name; received into the Christian church by baptism; named and dedicated ceremonially. (p. 10)
- jibes** Taunting, heckling, or jeering remarks. (p. 12)
- nondescript** Ordinary; uninteresting; of no recognized, definite, or particular type or kind. (p. 13)
- fledgling** A young bird that has recently acquired its flight feathers. (p. 13)
- serenely** Calmly, peacefully, tranquilly; accomplished in a composed, undisturbed manner. (p. 13)
- envious** Having a desire for another's advantages, skills, or possessions. (p. 13)
- honed** Sharpened with a fine-grained whetstone; refined; perfected. (p. 14)
- faltered** Showed unsteadiness in purpose or action, as from loss of courage or confidence; spoke hesitantly; stammered. (p. 14)
- taut** Emotionally or mentally strained or tense; tightly drawn; in good condition; tidy, neat. (p. 18)
- lagoon** An area of shallow water separated from the sea by low sandy dunes. (p. 19)
- lurked** Laid in waiting, as in ambush; moved furtively; sneaked; existed unobserved or undetected. (p. 19)
- ebbing** Falling back from the highest stage, as with the tide; declining. (p. 19)

Part 2: 2. *The Sea*

- atoll** A ring-shaped coral reef or a string of closely spaced small coral islands, enclosing or nearly enclosing a shallow lagoon. (p. 21)
- ascending** Moving upward; rising. (p. 22)
- desolation** A state of loneliness; sorrow; grief; dreariness; devastation; ruin. (p. 22)
- ominous** Threatening; foreshadowing evil or harm; menacing. (p. 22)
- gelatinous** Having the nature of or resembling jelly especially in consistence; jellylike; of, relating to, or containing gelatin. (p. 23)
- ballast** Any heavy material that gives steadiness or stability, especially in a craft designed for travel on water; anything that gives mental, moral, or political stability or steadiness. (p. 23)
- solitary** Alone; without companions; unattended. (p. 23)
- squall** A sudden, violent gust of wind, often accompanied by rain, snow, or sleet. (p. 24)
- instantaneous** Occurring, done, or completed in an instant; done or made as immediately or as quickly as possible; immediate; sudden; abrupt. (p. 24)
- inevitably** Unable to be avoided, evaded, or escaped; certain; sure to occur or happen. (p. 26)
- buoyancy** The power to float or rise in a fluid; lightness or resilience of spirit; cheerfulness. (p. 26)
- livid** Enraged; furiously angry; reddish or flushed; having a discolored bluish appearance caused by a bruise or congestion of blood vessels, as in the face, hands, flesh, or nails. (p. 27)
- prostrate** To cast (oneself) face down on the ground as in humility, submission, or adoration; to be thrown down level with the ground; to lie flat, as on the ground. (p. 28)
- luminous** Shining; radiating or reflecting light; brilliantly intellectual; easily understood. (p. 28)
- sultry** Characterized by excessive heat; sweltering. (p. 28)
- lulled** Soothed; calmed; caused to sleep or rest; quieted down; gave a false sense of safety. (p. 31)

Dictionary Discoveries

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about some challenging words from **1. Flight**. Write the letter of the correct answer in the blank at the left.

- _____ 1. A word that is an *antonym* of **taut** is (A) strained, (B) neat, (C) loose.
- _____ 2. **Capsized** is a good way to describe (A) a boat that has been turned upside down, (B) the end of a broken rope, (C) leaves being blown about in the wind.
- _____ 3. What is the correct interpretation of the following sentence?
Calvin watched the news broadcast with **indifference**.
Calvin (A) was paying close attention, (B) wasn't interested in the news, (C) seemed to be angry.
- _____ 4. Which of the following words has the same meaning as **serenely**?
(A) tranquilly, (B) violently, (C) hurriedly
- _____ 5. Where is the **most likely** place to find a **lagoon**? (A) in a desert, (B) in a mountainous region, (C) on an island shore.
- _____ 6. Which of the following would probably **not** be thought of or described as **frail**?
(A) a steel beam, (B) a crystal vase, (C) a person who has been ill for a long time.
- _____ 7. Which sentence correctly illustrates the use of the word **ebbing**? (A) The *ebbing* has been added to the trophy. (B) The athlete's popularity is rapidly *ebbing*. (C) The wind sent the leaves *ebbing* across the lawn.
- _____ 8. Which of the following is something that would probably **not** be **christened**? (A) a baby, (B) a ship, (C) a baseball team.
- _____ 9. An example of something that occurs at **intervals** is (A) the earth's rotation, (B) the positioning of traffic signals, (C) the passage of time.
- _____ 10. A **nondescript** building is one that is (A) ordinary and uninteresting, (B) very much different from the surrounding structures, (C) being constructed.
- _____ 11. A **fledgling** is a young (A) sea turtle, (B) bird, (C) goat.
- _____ 12. Which of the following is something that probably has never **lurked**? (A) a cat, (B) a shark, (C) a cow.
- _____ 13. An *antonym* of **pinnacle** is (A) abyss, (B) summit, (C) zenith.
- _____ 14. Which of the following phrases **best** illustrates the correct use of the word **shrouded**?
(A) *shrouded* in mystery, (B) *shrouded* homes, (C) *shrouded* in openness and honesty.
- _____ 15. What does it mean to say that someone **honed his skills**? He (A) perfected his skills, (B) lost interest in his work, (C) tried but failed at a difficult project.
- _____ 16. Which of the following words is **not** a **synonym** for **impending**?
(A) imminent, (B) approaching, (C) retreating
- _____ 17. To say that someone **faltered** could indicate that he or she (A) lost confidence, (B) fell down, (C) failed miserably.
- _____ 18. **Despairing** can be used correctly with the word (A) *exuberance*, (B) *remark*, (C) *plan*.
- _____ 19. Which of the following people is **most likely** to use **jibes**? (A) a bully, (B) a pastor, (C) a coach.
- _____ 20. **Envious** can be correctly applied to (A) a kitten playing with a toy mouse, (B) a person jealous of another's success, (C) someone driving an expensive car.

Short Answer Questions

1. *Flight*

1. When did Mafatu's story take place?
2. How old was Mafatu when he lost his mother and nearly his own life to the sea?
3. What words did the voice of the reef seem to say to Mafatu?
4. How did Mafatu's father react to his son's fear of the sea?
5. Because he was not allowed to go with the fishermen, what work did Mafatu do?
6. How was Kivi different from other albatross?
7. Why was the coming of the bonitos important for the boys of Hikueru?
8. When Mafatu overheard the boys' conversation about the fishing trip beyond the reef, what words set up a fierce resentment, leading him to know he must prove his courage?
9. Who were Mafatu's two companions when he left the island?
10. Who led Mafatu through the thundering reef?

2. *The Sea*

1. What were the Paths of the Sea that Mafatu's little canoe rode?
2. Once Mafatu was in the open ocean, what did it seem that Kivi had done?
3. After the storm snapped the sail from his canoe, how did Mafatu control his little craft?
4. What damage did the giant wave bring?
5. How did Uri give Mafatu courage?
6. What happened shortly after Kivi reappeared and seemed to be leading Mafatu onward?
7. How was the island that Mafatu approached different from Hikueru?
8. What was the time of day when Mafatu's canoe was lifted and crashed into splinters upon the reef?
9. What did Mafatu find when he dragged himself across the sand to the edge of the jungle?
10. What did Uri do before he drank?



1. Flight

Pages 7-20

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Mafatu's story took place before (A) the people of Hikueru began passing their stories through songs, (B) the traders and missionaries first came into the South Seas, (C) the Polynesians lived in great numbers in the South Seas.
- _____ 2. The early Polynesians (A) worshiped courage, and a man who was afraid had no place in their midst, (B) made slaves and servants of those who were not brave, (C) did not sail out into the Pacific, keeping close to the islands where they lived.
- _____ 3. Mafatu, the son of the Great Chief Tavana Nui, always had (A) been disobedient, refusing to learn the way of the Hikueru, (B) felt different because he was the son of a chief, (C) been afraid of the sea.
- _____ 4. The people of Hikueru (A) violently forced Mafatu out of their midst into a test of courage (B) thought of every member of their society as heroes, each one with his own personal chant (C) still sing Mafatu's story in their chants and tell it over the evening fires.
- _____ 5. Mafatu was (A) fourteen years old, (B) fifteen years old, (C) sixteen years old.
- _____ 6. When he was three, Mafatu and his mother were (A) caught at sea in a hurricane, and his mother died, (B) lost at sea for over a week before they were rescued by a neighboring tribe, (C) pushed by a storm into a coral cave where his mother was killed by sharks.
- _____ 7. Sometimes, in the hush of the night, Mafatu awoke and seemed to see (A) monsters spewing from the breaking waves, (B) the faces of the fisherman who had found him and his mother, (C) a thousand sharks circling his island.

Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

1. Flight

- Do you see Mafatu's fear of the sea as an understandable outcome of his terrifying experience as a three-year-old or was it a sign of his cowardice? Explain your thinking.
- If Mafatu were a modern boy trying to overcome his terror of the sea, where might he go for help?
- How could Mafatu's stepmother, stepbrothers, and father have helped him deal with his fear? Explain why they didn't try to help Mafatu. Was it because they were cruel people, or was their behavior based on the beliefs of their culture?
- If you could talk to Mafatu's father for fifteen minutes, what would you say to him?

After a time, Mafatu was not allowed to go with the fishermen because he brought ill luck. Instead, he had to stay home making spears and nets and twisting the husk of the coconut into sharkline for other boys to use, tasks considered woman's work.

- Though he was shunned by his people, how was he still a valuable member of the group? Do you think he was appreciated for his contribution? Why or why not?
- In modern society, what jobs would be the equivalent of the work that Mafatu did? Are the people who perform them thought of as valuable?
- Explain why there is a difference between the way Mafatu's people view his work and the way we would see its value.

Find evidence in the first chapter to prove that Mafatu was a *compassionate* person.

Kana talked to Mafatu about the plans the boys were making to go after the bonitos. He said the job the boys were expected to do would be fun.

- What do you think Kana had in mind when he talked to Mafatu about going out beyond the reef to hunt bonitos? Was he **taunting** Mafatu or **offering an opportunity** for him to overcome his fear and join them?

Mafatu wanted to say to Kana "*Wait. . . I'll go! I'll try. . .*" but the words would not come. Before he left, Kana started to speak but said nothing.

- Speculate as to what Kana was about to say. Explain how you reached your conclusion.
- If Mafatu had spoken and gone with the boys as he wanted, what do you suppose would have happened? Was he ready to face his fear?

Listening to the boys' conversation about their plans for the next day's adventure on the sea, Mafatu heard one say "*It's work for us all. How else will we become fishermen and warriors? How else will we feed our families and keep the tribe alive?*" His words were describing their planned trip to the reef to catch bonitos as part of their preparation for adulthood.

- What adult responsibilities in Mafatu's society are required in our society as well?
- What are the **differences** in the way Mafatu's tribe prepared its young for adulthood and the way we help young people grow into responsible adults? Are there any **similarities**?

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

All societies place a value on both personality traits and possessions. In Mafatu's society, **courage** was a most desired personal characteristic. Mafatu's grandfather was much respected because he possessed a necklace made of wild boar's teeth.

- Explain how, for Mafatu's people, courage was beneficial to them as a **group** and as **individuals**.
 - Why do you suppose Grandfather's necklace made from a wild boar's tusks was envied by the other men of the tribe. (Hint: How did Grandfather become the owner of a such an object?)
 - What personality traits or possessions would have made a person "rich" in Mafatu's society?
 - What are **two** personality traits that are considered valuable in our society? Explain how they are important to both the **whole country** (or **community**) as well as the **individual**.
 - In our world, what **possessions** are considered valuable? What do they usually signify?
 - Do you think it's **always wrong** to choose friends based on a certain level of wealth? Why or why not? (Think about how you would compare a millionaire who gained wealth by illegal means to a wealthy person who earned it by working hard and contributing to the well-being of others?)
-

The albatross is not generally thought of as a companion animal. However, Kivi was an important part of Mafatu's life.

- Research to find interesting facts about albatrosses. Chose the **three** that you think are the most impressive.
- Upon more than one occasion, Kivi was Mafatu's inspiration, companion, and guide. In your opinion what were the **three** most important contributions Kivi made to Mafatu's journey into courage?

Use the information and ideas to write a composition about **Kivi—Albatross and Friend**. (See **Graphic Organizer #4**)

Find evidence from the story to prove that Uri was both a loyal companion and the inspiration that helped Mafatu find the courage hidden within himself. Speculate as to how Mafatu's life would have been different without Uri. How was Uri a priceless treasure? Write a composition about **Uri—an Inspirational Companion** (See **Graphic Organizer #5**)

Research the **Pacific Islands** to answer the following questions about their geography:

- What word is given to these islands as a group? Approximately how many islands are there in this geographic region?
 - There are three main groups of islands in the Pacific—**Melanesia**, **Micronesia**, and **Polynesia**. What is the *meaning* of the name given to each group? What main islands make up each collection?
 - Pacific Islands are further classified as *high islands* or *low islands*. What natural forces formed (and *are forming*) each type of island? How do they compare in size? Which kind have the largest populations? Why?
 - What is the largest Pacific island? Which Pacific island chain is a U.S. State?
 - Draw a map of the region showing the three major island groups. Identify **ten** islands of your choice by name.
-

Kivi—Albatross and Friend

The albatross is not generally thought of as a companion animal. However, Kivi was an important part of Mafatu's life.

- Research to find interesting facts about albatrosses. Choose the **three** that you think are the most impressive.
- Upon more than one occasion, Kivi was Mafatu's inspiration, companion, and guide. In your opinion, what were Kivi's **three** most important contributions to Mafatu's story?
- Use the form below to organize your information and ideas. Write a composition about **Kivi—Albatross and Friend**.

