

call it courage by armstrong sperry 1

call it courage by armstrong sperry 1 is a classic novel that has captivated readers with its timeless themes of bravery, self-discovery, and adventure. Written by Armstrong Sperry, this literary work tells the story of a young boy's transformation as he faces his fears and embarks on a journey of courage and resilience. The novel is often celebrated for its vivid portrayal of Polynesian culture and its inspiring narrative that appeals to readers of all ages. In this article, we will explore the background of the book, analyze its major themes and characters, discuss its literary significance, and provide insights into why *call it courage by armstrong sperry 1* remains a beloved piece of literature. This comprehensive overview will also include information on the author's style, the historical context of the story, and its impact on readers and educators alike.

- Background and Publication History
- Plot Summary and Setting
- Main Characters and Character Development
- Themes and Symbolism
- Literary Style and Structure
- Cultural and Historical Context
- Reception and Legacy

Background and Publication History

call it courage by armstrong sperry 1 was first published in 1940 and quickly gained recognition for its compelling storytelling and rich cultural depiction. Armstrong Sperry, an American author and illustrator, drew upon his experiences and interest in the South Pacific to create an authentic narrative that resonated with readers. The novel was awarded the Newbery Medal in 1941, a prestigious honor recognizing outstanding contributions to children's literature. This accolade helped solidify the book's place in educational curricula and libraries around the world. Understanding the background of its publication offers valuable insight into the novel's origins and enduring appeal.

Plot Summary and Setting

The story of *call it courage by armstrong sperry 1* centers on Mafatu, a young Polynesian boy who is plagued by a deep fear of the sea despite being born into a seafaring culture. Determined to prove his bravery and overcome his fears, Mafatu sets out alone on a voyage across the ocean. The plot follows his struggles for survival, self-reliance, and growth as he faces natural challenges and internal doubts. The setting plays a crucial role, with vivid descriptions of the South Pacific islands,

the ocean, and the natural environment that shape Mafatu's journey and character development.

Main Characters and Character Development

The novel features several key characters who contribute to the narrative and Mafatu's transformation. The protagonist, Mafatu, undergoes significant growth from a fearful boy to a courageous young man. His father and mother represent traditional expectations and cultural values, serving as both sources of motivation and conflict. Secondary characters, including animals and island inhabitants, enrich the story and reflect themes of survival and companionship. The character development in *call it courage by armstrong sperry 1* is central to understanding its message about personal strength and maturity.

Key Characters

- **Mafatu:** The protagonist who struggles with his fear of the sea and seeks to prove his courage.
- **Mafatu's Father:** A strong, traditional man who embodies the expectations of bravery in their culture.
- **Mafatu's Mother:** A nurturing figure who supports Mafatu emotionally.
- **Animal companions:** Including a dog and a bird, symbolizing loyalty and freedom.

Themes and Symbolism

call it courage by armstrong sperry 1 explores several profound themes, including courage, self-discovery, and the relationship between humans and nature. The narrative emphasizes the importance of facing one's fears and growing through adversity. Symbolism is woven throughout the story, with the sea representing both danger and opportunity, and Mafatu's journey symbolizing a rite of passage. Additionally, the novel highlights cultural identity and respect for the environment, reflecting the author's deep appreciation for Polynesian traditions.

Major Themes

- **Courage and Fear:** The central theme focusing on overcoming inner fears to achieve personal growth.
- **Self-Reliance:** Mafatu's journey toward independence and confidence.
- **Man and Nature:** The interaction and harmony between humans and the natural world.

- **Culture and Tradition:** The significance of Polynesian customs and values.

Literary Style and Structure

Armstrong Sperry's writing style in *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry 1 is noted for its clear, descriptive prose and engaging narrative flow. The author combines vivid imagery with straightforward language, making the novel accessible to younger readers while maintaining literary depth. The story is structured as a linear adventure, punctuated by moments of introspection and detailed environmental descriptions. Sperry's use of symbolism and thematic layering enhances the reading experience, providing both entertainment and educational value.

Cultural and Historical Context

The novel is set in the Polynesian islands and reflects the culture, traditions, and environment of the South Pacific during the early 20th century. Armstrong Sperry's own travels and studies contributed to the authenticity of the cultural depiction. The historical context includes an emphasis on traditional seafaring lifestyles and the challenges faced by island inhabitants. This setting provides readers with a window into a unique cultural world while reinforcing universal themes of courage and growth. Understanding this context enriches appreciation for the novel's depth and significance.

Reception and Legacy

Since its publication, *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry 1 has received widespread acclaim from critics, educators, and readers. The novel's Newbery Medal win boosted its prominence, making it a staple in children's literature and school reading lists. Its impact extends beyond its literary merits, inspiring discussions about bravery, cultural awareness, and environmental respect. The book continues to be studied and enjoyed, with adaptations and reprints ensuring its legacy endures. Its influence is evident in the way it shapes young readers' understanding of courage and self-belief.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Call It Courage' by Armstrong Sperry?

The main theme of 'Call It Courage' is overcoming fear and gaining courage through personal growth and self-discovery.

Who is the protagonist of 'Call It Courage' and what challenge does he face?

The protagonist is Mafatu, a young Polynesian boy who fears the sea, and he must overcome his fear

to prove his courage.

Where is 'Call It Courage' set?

The story is set in the South Pacific Islands, reflecting Polynesian culture and environment.

How does Mafatu demonstrate courage in the story?

Mafatu shows courage by setting out alone on a small boat into the open sea, surviving various challenges, and ultimately confronting his fears.

What role do animals play in 'Call It Courage'?

Animals, such as the albatross and a wild boar, serve as both obstacles and companions, symbolizing Mafatu's journey and growth.

Why is the book titled 'Call It Courage'?

The title reflects Mafatu's journey to define and claim his own courage despite fear and adversity.

What age group is 'Call It Courage' appropriate for?

It is typically recommended for middle-grade readers, around ages 8 to 12.

How does Armstrong Sperry's writing style contribute to the story?

Sperry's descriptive and vivid writing immerses readers in the island setting and Mafatu's emotional journey.

Has 'Call It Courage' received any notable awards?

Yes, 'Call It Courage' won the Newbery Medal in 1941 for distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

What lessons can readers learn from 'Call It Courage'?

Readers learn about bravery, self-reliance, resilience, and the importance of facing one's fears to grow stronger.

Additional Resources

1. *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell

This novel tells the story of Karana, a young Native American girl who survives alone on an isolated island off the California coast. Like *Call It Courage*, it explores themes of courage, survival, and self-reliance in the face of nature's challenges. Karana's journey is one of growth and resilience, making it a compelling read for those interested in coming-of-age stories set in the natural world.

2. *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen

Hatchet follows the story of Brian Robeson, a thirteen-year-old boy stranded alone in the Canadian wilderness after a plane crash. The novel focuses on his struggle to survive with only a hatchet and his wits, highlighting themes of bravery, resourcefulness, and personal strength. It shares similarities with *Call It Courage* in its portrayal of a young protagonist overcoming fear and adversity.

3. *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor

Set during World War II, *The Cay* tells the story of a young boy named Phillip who is stranded on a deserted island with an older man named Timothy. The story explores themes of friendship, survival, and overcoming prejudice. Like *Call It Courage*, it emphasizes courage and growth in an isolated, challenging environment.

4. *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George

This novel chronicles the adventures of Sam Gribble, a boy who leaves his New York City home to live in the Catskill Mountains alone. It delves deeply into themes of independence, survival skills, and connection with nature. Readers who appreciate the self-discovery and bravery in *Call It Courage* will enjoy this story of wilderness adventure.

5. *The Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare

In this historical novel, a young boy named Matt is left to guard his family's cabin in the wilderness while his father goes for help. He forms a friendship with a Native American boy named Attean, learning about survival and cultural differences. The book shares themes of courage, trust, and personal growth akin to those in *Call It Courage*.

6. *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls

This classic tale follows Billy, a boy who trains two hunting dogs and experiences adventures in the Ozark Mountains. The story is rich with themes of determination, courage, and the bond between humans and animals. Like *Call It Courage*, it deals with the challenges of growing up and facing fears.

7. *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George

Set in the Arctic, this novel tells the story of a young Inuit girl, Julie, who survives alone in the wilderness by befriending a pack of wolves. It explores themes of survival, understanding nature, and personal courage. The book's focus on a young protagonist confronting and adapting to a harsh environment parallels *Call It Courage*.

8. *Peak* by Roland Smith

Peak centers on a fourteen-year-old boy who attempts to become the youngest person to climb Mount Everest. The novel deals with physical and emotional challenges, perseverance, and the courage to face daunting obstacles. Fans of *Call It Courage* will appreciate the themes of bravery and self-discovery in extreme conditions.

9. *The White Fang* by Jack London

This novel tells the story of White Fang, a wild wolfdog who experiences both the harshness of nature and the complexities of human relationships. Themes of survival, courage, and the struggle between wilderness and civilization are prominent. Like *Call It Courage*, it presents a compelling narrative of resilience and transformation.

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