



Copyright Walter Farley 1942
Random House



1. OUT WHERE THE SURF BEGINS

Larry Wilson had never before seen anything like it! More than a quarter of a mile off Waikiki Beach came a soaring line of brown-skinned surfboard riders. Skillfully they stood erect on their narrow rushing boards, keeping balance with superb grace in front of a huge rolling wave. Beside them, large hollow outrigger canoes, manned by happy, shout-

"What's he doing that for?" Larry asked of a man near him.

"It's an old Hawaiian custom for bringing a big wave," he replied, smiling.

"It seems to be working this time," Larry said. "Here comes one!"

Over the reef came a straight, even wall of water; higher and higher it rolled as it surged toward them. The surf riders quickly pointed their boards toward shore, turned on their stomachs, and began paddling as hard as their strong shoulders could propel them through the water.

Larry concentrated his attention on the brown-skinned youth who he had seen toss the water over his shoulder. Suddenly the wave caught up with him . . . for a second his arms paddled furiously. Then the wave had his board and it surged forward faster than ever. Larry saw him rise to one knee, then to both knees. A second later he was standing gracefully erect, practically walking on top of the wave! Larry felt a thrill go through him. If only *he* could do that!

Larry noticed that as the rider went speedily toward the shore he did not steer in a straight line but slid sideways along the wave, getting greater speed and distance. Larry's gaze shifted to some of the others. Many of them had not "caught" the wave, and others had fallen. Still others had let the wave

go by and were waiting patiently for another big one to come over the reef.

Larry decided to try and "catch" the next wave himself. A few minutes later when it came over the reef, he turned his board with the others and started paddling. Harder and harder his arms plunged into the water, and his shoulders began to ache. Now the wave was almost on top of him. Still faster he paddled, but the Hawaiians were passing him! Then the wave slipped by . . . he had missed it.

He lay exhausted on his board for a few minutes, and then turned back toward the reef. Dad was right, this wasn't exactly an easy sport!

And an hour later, when he still hadn't "caught" a wave, he was sure of it. His arms were like weights, sharp pains shot through his shoulders every time he raised an arm. Still he refused to be beaten. He was going to "catch" one of those waves yet!

He looked up at the sun. It was low in the heavens, he had lost all track of time. "Once more," he told himself. "Once more, and this time I'll get it!"

The chosen wave soon came over the reef, and the riders turned their boards. Larry forced his arms to dig into the water, though each stroke was agony. "Faster, faster," he shouted to himself. The Hawaiian youths weren't pulling away from him this time. Then the wave was catching up to him. He felt it shove at his feet. He paddled harder than ever, put-

ting his last ounce of strength into his strokes. Then the board suddenly plunged forward. He had "caught" the wave! Desperately trying to balance the board he rose to one knee, then the other, and for a second he rose to both feet. And never had he experienced a thrill like it! It was like the first dip of a roller coaster except that there was no bottom! Then Larry found that there *was* a bottom, for he lost his balance and went flying off. He felt the waters close over his head.

When he came up, he looked for his board. The wave was taking it well toward shore, a quarter of a mile away! Suddenly he realized how tired he was. Funny, that he hadn't given any thought to what he would do when this happened. He was a strong swimmer, but his arms and shoulders were more tired than they had ever been. They were even getting numb. Larry knew he mustn't lose his head . . . Dad had taught him better than that. He tread water slowly, conserving every bit of energy he had left. Nobody else was around, but then he was a little less than halfway from the reef to the shore. The riders who had "caught" the wave with him would be coming back soon. *He could see a rider*

Wish they'd hurry, though, Larry thought; seems as if everyone must've "caught" that wave. Guess it was an easy one. What a thrill! Wish tomorrow would hurry up and come so I'll be nice and rested,

He turned on his back and floated,

be almost one o'clock," Li said, looking up at the sun.

"Yeah, and I'm tired and hungry," Larry said. "But, Li, I honestly don't know when I've had so much fun!"

"You going home for lunch?" Li asked.

"No, not necessarily," Larry answered. "Dad won't be back until tonight."

"Then stay with me. There's a lunch stand on the other side of the Outrigger Club. Afterwards we might go spear fishing. . . ."

"Sounds swell!"

Li started to turn the Red Devil around, then he stopped and waved. Two surfboards were coming toward them. On one Larry saw a Hawaiian youth about his own age. On the other he saw a girl, whose powerful strokes were sending her board toward them as fast as the boy's. She came right up to them and skillfully maneuvered her board alongside the Red Devil.

"*Aloha*," Li called. Then he turned to Larry. "This is my sister, Lehua."

"Hello," Larry said. He noticed that she looked like Li . . . the same liquid brown eyes and proud features. "You two look enough alike to be twins," he added.

"Ae, we are," she said, laughing gayly, "but Li never likes to be told he looks like me."

Li, who had been conversing with the Hawaiian youth, now made the second introduction. "This is Nohu Omakaha, but everybody calls him 'Duke.'"

"*Aloha*," responded Larry.

A few minutes later Lehua and Duke left them. Larry watched the girl in amazement as she "caught" a wave and rode it as expertly as Li.

"Your sister is very good," he remarked.

"*Ae*, she is." Li's voice was proud.

Larry turned his attention to Duke, and noticed how skillfully he, too, handled his board. Li was watching also. "Duke is a good rider," he said, "but he's reckless . . . someday he'll hurt somebody or get hurt himself."

Larry understood what Li meant, a few moments later, when Duke bore down upon a group of surfers, then skillfully turned his board away, narrowly missing them.

"He shows off in front of Lehua," Li said. "He likes her very much. After a while he'll go over to the reef, and maybe out to the aircraft carrier." Li pointed to the Navy ship anchored a mile away. "He does that just to show her he's not afraid of anything, even of *ma'o*, the shark. Luck has been with him so far . . . a surfboard is not much to have under you, when you meet *ma'o*."

"No, I guess not," agreed Larry, "and that's why I'll stay on this side of the reef."