

Dear Aesop,

Tidying out my bookshelf, as I do at the start of every school year, I created a disorderly pile of about thirty books to give away. My mom entered my room and began sorting them into paper bags. She stopped abruptly, with a large crimson hardback book in her hand.

“Have you read this book of Aesop's fables?” she asked me.

“Of course not! It's for little kids,” I retorted immediately.

“These fables were originally made for adults. Try reading just one,” my mom suggested, as she returned the book to the keeper pile.

I rolled my eyes while reluctantly agreeing to read one story. That very night, I became hooked. As an animal lover, I found the stories and their morals very entertaining. Reading each fable was like munching on a piece of delicious candy, bursting with flavor. After reading the entire book, I was hungry for more. Searching online, I found several additional volumes, containing more sweet morsels of tales about life.

One fable that really resonated with me was The Hares and the Frogs. I felt awfully bad for the hares when they made their decision that death would be far better than living in misery. You must be in a desperate situation and seriously depressed to want to kill yourself. There is no turning back once you have died. People who commit suicide have to be very determined to be successful in ending their life. I believe they could use this energy and determination to find a way out of their predicament. I don't want people to feel that suicide is the only way out of their troubles, and to think thoughts like, “*What's the point of living?*” Reading this fable, I realized there is more to the moral of the story; it is not just that there are always people less fortunate than me, it is that I should help them enjoy a better life.

Some people think that I am unfortunate with my vision impairment and glaucoma, but really I am very happy with the life that I lead; I have a home, a loving family, food, a good school, and lots of friends. I would rather become totally blind than deeply depressed and desperate to end it all. There are kids who have glaucoma like me, but are also unhappy or depressed. As I read your fables, I asked myself, *How can I help others worse off than me?* As I continued reading, I encountered another fable, The Bundle of Sticks, which helped me find the answer.

The Bundle of Sticks proved to me that people are stronger when they are united. When the sticks were tied in a bundle, they could not be broken, but when they were separated, each one could be snapped easily. I thought about ideas for a few weeks, and I

have decided to start a blog to unite kids living with visual impairment. Every month I will write about my life in middle school and my experiences living with glaucoma. I hope people will read my blog and think of ways to make their life better. We can all support each other, like the bundle of sticks, and become lifelong friends. I hope that people with eye problems similar to mine will try to live life to the fullest, and know that a girl named Sarah can live a fulfilling life with similar eye conditions.

I feel exhilarated after picking up and reading your book of fables. They had a big impact on my life, and how I think of others. Thank you for writing such inspiring tales.

Sincerely,

Sarah Rose Smale