

Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille excerpt, pages 9-13

My family did what they could.

Papa made a wooden cane.

Each day I walked a little farther, *tap-tap, tap-tap, tap-tap...*

counting the steps between the house and the garden,

the vineyard and the chicken coop,

the baker's and the miller's...

And back to Papa's shop.



Text Talk U1 W7 D4

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My brother taught me to whistle:
vreeee, vreeee, vreeeew!
And when the sound echoed back,
It warned me of things in my path.

My sisters made a straw alphabet.
Papa made letters with leather strips
or by pounding round-topped
nails into boards.

With Maman, I played dominoes,
counting the dots with my fingertips.



The village priest taught me to recognize trees by their touch,
flowers by their scent, and birds by their song.

I listened closely as he read to me
from the Bible and from books of poetry.

"Do you have books for blind children?" I asked.

"No, Louis," the priest replied. "I'm sorry."



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Text Talk U1 W7 D4

When I was older, I went to school with the other village children.

All day, as they wrote down words and numbers

or read out loud from printed pages,

I sat in the front row, listening and memorizing.

“Do you have books for blind children?” I asked again.

“No, Louis,” the teacher replied. “I’m sorry.”

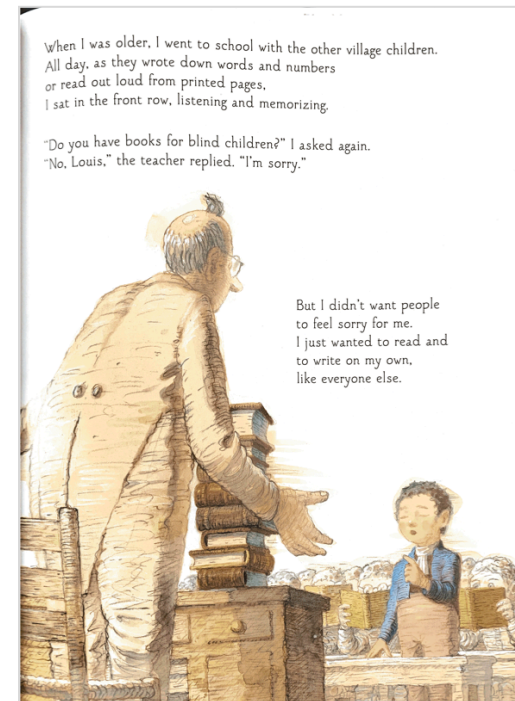
But I didn’t want people

to feel sorry for me.

I just wanted to read and

to write on my own,

like everyone else.



The Marquise, a noble lady living nearby, heard about me.
She wrote a letter to the Royal School for the Blind, asking if I could study there.
Finally, a reply came. *Bienvenue!* "Welcome, Louis!"



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"The priest says they have books for the blind!" I told Papa excitedly.

"But you're only *ten*!" Maman cried.

"And you'll live there most of the year," my brother added.

"Paris is a big city, far away!" my sisters warned.

How could I make them understand? Without books,
I would always be "poor Louis Braille." I would always be
held back, like that dog chained too tight.

"I love you," I told them.

"But I must go."

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