

Dear Mr. Verne,

When I first had a major bullying issue, I could only think of one fair outcome for that problem, the bully would be revealed as the person he was and thus be denied any chances in life, and everyone would be sympathetic of me, the victim. I could not conceive how anything else could be fair, as it was obviously his fault, thus he should be the one paying the price. For a couple of years I lived under this thinking, which drove me to become a tattletale, as it was how I thrived, how else could the culprits be punished? By reading your book, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, I saw that bullies can be the victims and deserve just as much of chance to prove their true potential as I have.

While I was reading your book, I found myself marveling at Captain Nemo. He was an amazing genius with the potential to change the world. Captain Nemo also proved he had bravery, a skill well revered by his fellow man. Such was demonstrated in the squid attack, when Nemo did all he could to save a fellow crewmember. While Captain Nemo had all he could want, he was hurt very deeply inside. Such turned him away from the rest of mankind. He found them to be uncivilized, incapable of holding the inventions and wonders he had at his fingertips. Nemo began a mad rampage, terrorizing shipping lanes as a "sea monster," destroying the seeds of war before they could germinate. To the other people of the world, those bullied by his actions, this would seem tyrannical and unfair. They did not hold the same beliefs as Nemo, and therefore could not justify his actions. But Nemo wasn't a tyrant. He was deeply saddened by the fact that he must resort to this. After taking a ship he would often sit in his room for days on end, emerging only to pour his soul out on the organ. He hurt others because he was hurt, and he felt he could justify his actions because he deserved to bully the world back, why should he be the one to pay? He needed something to fill the void in his heart, the place that mankind had ripped out of him. What he began to realize was that killing couldn't fill the void in his heart. What Captain Nemo needed was love. He needed someone to be there for him, to help him through his hard time. After understanding this, I realized the bullies only bullied because they had been the victim, and they needed more than ever to have someone to help them.

I still am occasionally bullied and I am almost positive I will always be bullied but now I am willing to look past a bully's thick shell and have compassion for them, as I know something is not right for them. I have found myself more willing to let things go as I know that they don't necessarily mean to target me personally, they just needed something to fill their void. We must realize that as long as there are victims in the world, there will be bullies. But while there are always bullies, there can always be someone there for them, to close the void in their hearts.

Sincerely,

Stephen Hitchcock, Grade 8