

## The Star Thrower<sup>1</sup>

A professor had a habit of early morning walks on the beach. One day, after a storm, he saw a young woman in the distance. As he came closer he saw that it was a student who was reaching down to the sand, picking up starfish and very gently throwing them into the sea.



"Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" he asked.

She replied, "They are stranded on the shore. The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back they will die."

"But don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? There are simply too many to save."

She paused and thought for a while. Then she bent down, picked up a starfish and threw it over the breaking waves, and replied, **"It made a difference for that one."**

Inspired, old professor joined her in throwing starfish back into the ocean, saving one at a time.

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<sup>1</sup> This story is adapted by Dr. Phil Rogers from part of a 16-page essay of the same name by Loren Eiseley (1907–1977), published in 1969 in *The Unexpected Universe*. ***The Star Thrower*** is also the title of a 1978 anthology of Eiseley's works (including the essay), which he completed shortly before his death.