

The Rule of Thumb

A Sew Powerful Parable by Dana Buck

Behold the complex human body
Some average, some chubby, some spare
Some blessed with an hourglass figure
While others are shaped like a pear

Legs may be gangly or knock kneed
Like a cowboy all bended and bowed
Faces are wrinkled with crow's feet
While feet can be called pigeon toed

Hair may be bushy or absent
There's blue eyes and brown, gray or green
Some body parts take in the sunshine
While others stay clothed and unseen

There is cartilage and tendon and muscle
Nails, bone, tissue and scalp
Noses distinctively Roman
And those that belong in the Alps

But no matter the characteristics
Of each individual part
They're designed to all function together
And never to function apart

But, what if there should be a rebellion?
What if design and synergy fail?
What if one little member refused to surrender
Well, there lies an interesting tale...

For the thumb nursed a deep discontentment
His callouses speak louder than words
He considers the other four fingers
To be shallow and vain and absurd

“Index just points or he scratches”
“And indicates he’s number one”
“When twirled by the side of the temple
“He calls people crazy or dumb”

“Ring is conceited and haughty”
“Sporting his bright golden band”
“For anything else he is useless”
“The spoiled rotten brat of the hand”

“Pinky, well don’t get me started”
“Is there any as silly as he?”
“Acting all high and pretentious”
“When we’re holding a hot cup of tea”

“Middle, he’s nothing but trouble”
“Causes arguments, quarrels and havoc”
“Seems the only thing he’s ever good for”
“Are gestures in rush hour traffic”

“And what of the countless expressions”
“That season our everyday speech”
“Is the hand only made up of fingers?”
“Why, if I were the mouth I would screech”

“There is finger paint, finger holds, fingerlings”
“Fingernails, finger bowls, fingertips”
“Finger sandwiches, sweet ladyfingers”
“Finger pointing and yes, fingerprints”

“I’m tired of being second fiddle”
“I’m on strike till I’m seen as I should”
“Till I’m the one wagging or pointing”
“And chicken is thumb licking good!”

“From now on there’ll be no more hitchhiking”
“No thumbs up sign for good, go or yup”
“Don’t extend me to view a fine painting or two”
“And good luck picking anything up”

So with that, thumb resigned from the body
Just hung there as limp as a fish
If this move was a cry for attention
Believe me, thumb soon got his wish

For hair went uncombed and was messy
Shoelaces, loose and untied
It was futile to zip up a zipper
No matter how hard it was tried

The talent to hook, snug or fasten
Button, snap, tie, clasp or cinch
Were suddenly rendered inactive
Along with squeeze, grasp, pull and pinch

Without thumb, it now made a toothbrush
As useless as knife, fork and spoon
There was no folding a map, or tipping a cap
And forget blowing up a balloon

It was time for emergency measures
For the body to take up the question
Of what could be done to placate the thumb
And thus end this one-digit secession

There was surely no end of ideas
Put forward as options to do
The problem was each body member
Saw things from their own point of view

The eyes recommended a movie
The feet said "Let's go for a walk"
The nose thought the answer was flowers
The ears cried "Beethoven or Bach!"

A massage was suggested by shoulders
The mouth called for anything sweet
The stomach endorsed that idea
"I agree, let's get something to eat"

The lungs thought fresh air the idea
That was ok with the liver and spine
But as quick as you please, both the hips and the knees
Said "That's out, as we don't want to climb"

The neck felt a keen twinge of tension
The nerves were beginning to fray
The body was ceasing to function
With the anatomy in disarray

And just when it seemed the whole system
Was headed for certain collapse
Another part spoke with distinction
"May I make a comment, perhaps?"

The talk was immediately silenced
To hear what was soon to impart
And all could detect the awe and respect
For this voice was the voice of the heart

“It seems that our brother is troubled”
“By a sense he’s not honored or seen”
“He feels raw and taken advantage”
“An unrecognized cog in a machine”

“We all know the truth in this matter”
“It’s as plain as the nose on our face”
“We simply must offer each other”
“Appreciation and kindness and grace”

“Our friend, thumb, has shown us the issue”
“And I truly believe we should heed him”
“No flowers or movie or candy”
“Simply love him and show that we need him”

“Besides, to be frank, clear and honest”
“And know that I speak from the heart”
“If we don’t all soon function together”
“We surely shall perish apart”

And with that, the whole body was silent
They’d now heard the truth and they knew
Every member deserves recognition
No matter the job that they do

In fact, it would seem very likely
That the quiet, unassuming, the small
May be, in the maker’s designing
The most deserving of honor of all

They resolved to heed heart’s admonitions
And voted to keep every word
But before they could carry the motion
A humble, contrite voice was heard

“I’m sorry, you guys, for the trouble”

“I know I’ve been selfish and rude”

“I didn’t consider the body”

“I let ego and pride here intrude”

“I heard what the heart had to tell you”

“And I know every comment is true”

“I demanded respect and your honor”

“But I never gave it to you”

As thumb spoke to make restitution

He felt encouragement come from the heart

“I promise I’ll try and do better”

“If you’ll just offer me a new start”

The whole body erupts in rejoicing

Celebration cannot be denied

The hands lifted in exaltation

As thumb goes along for the ride

The fingers and thumb reconciling

Is the highlighted part of the day

And when again they are one, the index and thumb

Make a circle, the sign for “ok”

And later there’s washing and combing

Then picking up spoon, fork and knife

They all eat a ravenous dinner

(Much to the stomach’s delight)

With their unity cherished and strengthened

And with love and respect as the tether

They promise to not go asunder

For they know they’re much stronger together

So, as peace settles over the body
And our quaint little tale now is done
The moral of the story? To God be the Glory
May that be our own rule of thumb