

The Finger

by Philip W. Weiss

During this summer I formed a special relationship, not with a lady (although I could use a good woman in my life) or with a pet (you know, like those people so desperate for companionship that they transform an animal into a love object) or with an inanimate artifact (like those people who re-imagine a piece of junk as a priceless memento), but with my left pinky. This relationship started two months ago on a basketball court where a basketball someone passed to me jammed my left pinky producing a loud cracking sound which announced to the world that my left pinky was fractured. Little did I know nor could I possibly have imagined that this event would mark the start of a new relationship in my life. I won't bore you with the medical details. Suffice it to say that my left pinky was examined and x-rayed which confirmed the fracture. I had surgery to reduce the fracture, and after almost a month wearing a cast followed by a plastic brace, my doctors declared me and my left pinky were ready for rehab. My left pinky, and the rest of my hand, needed to be taught how to function again as a hand. That was a task easier said than done. My left pinky had become lazy. It refused to budge. Its resistance mocked me. It dared me to make it bend. It challenged me to make it work again. Well, I would have none of that. I was determined to regain control of my left pinky, no matter what it took. It was either me or my pinky, and I was

determined to win that battle. I did dips, pips, and towel grabs followed by hooks, glides and extensions. In reply, my left pinky complained, communicating its unhappiness with pain, as if trying to confirm the maxim no gain without pain. For my pinky had been spoiled. Seventy-seven years of easy service not doing heavy lifting but pushing papers had made my left pinky soft and snug. Now faced with the need to work, my left pinky balked that forced me to confront my pinky resulting in a conversation that went something like this:

Me: "Okay, pinky, time to get to work."

Pinky: "I'm resting. Leave me alone."

Me: "No, my friend. Time to stretch and bend."

Pinky: "I told you not now. I'm still feeling sore."

Me: "You're supposed to feel sore."

Pinky: "That's easy for you to say. You're not the one who got broke."

Me: "Don't sass me"

Pinky: "I'm not sassing you. I just need more rest."

Me: "You've had enough rest."

Pinky: "No, I haven't. I'm still feeling sore from the last session."

Me: "That's too bad, but I need for you to get back on line."

Pinky: "Go pick on another finger."

Me: "You're the one that was broken."

Pinky: "That wasn't my fault. You should have caught the basketball."

Me: "Well, I didn't."

Pinky: "Obviously you didn't you clumsy klutz."

Me: "I'm not a clumsy klutz. When playing ball, injuries happen."

Pinky: "But why to me?"

Me: "Because you're the point guard for my left hand."

Pinky: "I never volunteered for that job."

Me: "Wrong. It was a job you were born to do."

Pinky: "That's unfair."

Me: Would you rather I have you removed?

Pinky: "Removed? What do you mean by removed?"

Me: "You know, cut off?"

Pinky: "You can't do that!"

Me: "Oh yes I can. All I need to do is ask my doctor and off you'll go."

Pinky: "You would really do that to me?"

Me: "Right now, no, but if you keep on making a fuss, I could change my mind."

Pinky: "Oh, you're just fooling. You'd never get rid of me."

Me: "And I don't want to. I want to keep you just where you are, but only if you cooperate. So, what do you say?"

Pinky: "Okay, you win. Let's get back to work."

Me: "Thank you."

These are the kinds of conversations I have with my left pinky every day. I have learned to put up with that feisty appendage. As for the rest of my left

hand, my other fingers aren't too happy with me either. My ring finger calls me pushy, my middle finger calls me a bully, my pointer and thumb say I'm worse than a drill sergeant and the rest of my hand wishes that I leave it alone. I don't take any of this guff personally. They can't help feeling put off. After all, being injured is no fun and can stress out even the most stalwart body parts. So, I understand how they feel and I'm willing to forgive and move on. I just hope my left pinky and the rest of my hand feels the same way.