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488 words.

A HELPING HAND

by Miles Rausch

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter

Blake had a spot four inches from the back of the desk that was perfect for his laptop. He cleared a hemisphere of dust before setting his computer down. He arranged his talismans: steaming mug, smartphone, earbuds. He moved the lamp just so, then again, and again. Then he sighed.

"This," said Blake, "is my last wretched short story."

Blake shook out his hands like old gloves stiff with dirt and clapped them together. He rested his digits along the keys, waiting for his fingers to settle and his muse to awaken.

He wrote: Darius, ak monkey of greeat renown, hade never known plove.

Blake frowned. Four egregious misspellings stood above their jagged red lines. He moved his cursor to the word "plove"

and had raised his left pinky to tap the "Delete" key when something struck him. It was his left hand, now wagging its finger in admonishment.

'Odd,' thought Blake as the body part returned to his control. As he moved once more to erase, Lefty tackled Righty, tumbling off the keyboard and onto the desktop. Blake tried to extricate his dominant hand, but the other held tight.

"What do you want?" asked Blake.

Lefty rose and pointed at the device.

"Keyboard? Typing?"

It shook itself in a primitive nod.

"Are you going to hurt us?"

The left stroked the right in consolation. Slightly assuaged, Blake flexed and brought his hands together to crack his knuckles. Blake elicited a satisfying chorus of snaps before settling over the black monographed squares.

He continued: Therefore, with trepidation, he approached St. Claire's cathedral in attendance of the first ever human-simian dating club.

More errors marred his document. Blake had watched as Lefty deliberately tapped unnecessary letters, in some cases leaping across the entire space.

"Whatever," said Blake, shutting the lid. Lefty resisted,

forcing a taut digit against the descending glass. They struggled in inches. Suddenly, the hand came at Blake and knocked him in the chest. Blake recoiled from the strange violence that was not his own.

'Just finish this last crappy story so you can move on,' thought Blake. He reset the screen. He exhaled.

Blake typed: He pwas anxious. Such interactions introduded a certain morael relativity. It was notoriously pooarly attended, as osne could imaginee.

"Seriously?" said Blake. "You ruined every sentence!"

"Tough morning?" asked Tess, poking in with a bemused expression on her face.

"I can't seem to spell anything right," Blake said.

Tess was over his shoulder, already absorbed. "Guess the right hand doesn't know what the left is doing."

"You have no idea..."

Tess chuckled. "Did you do that on purpose? The typos?"

"Actually, the strangest thing-"

"I like how the extra letters spell something," she added before disappearing into the hallway.

Blake turned back to his work and jotted down the gratuitous letters. Then he laughed, too.

"Message received, guys," he told his hands. "Looks like we

have some writing to do."

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