



Why The Thumb Stands Alone - A Folktale From Africa

Once five fingers stood side by side on a hand. They were all friends. Where one went the others went. They worked together. They played together. They ate and washed and wrote and did their chores together.

One day the five fingers were resting on a table together when they spied a gold ring lying nearby.

“What a shiny ring!” exclaimed the First Finger.

“It would look good on me.” declared the Second Finger!

“Let’s take it,” suggested the Third Finger.

“Quick! While nobody’s looking!” whispered the Fourth Finger.

They started to reach for the ring when the Fifth Finger, the one named Thumb, spoke up. “Wait! We should not do that,” it cried!

“Why NOT?” demanded the four fingers.

“Because that ring does not belong to us,” said the Thumb,

“It is wrong to take something that does not belong to you.”

“ But who is going to know?” asked the other fingers. “No one will see us! Come on!”

“NO!” said the Thumb, “it is stealing!”

Then the other fingers began to laugh and make fun of the thumb.

“You are afraid,” said the First Finger.

“What a goody, goody,” said the Second Finger.

“You are just mad because it will not fit you,” said the Third Finger.

“We thought you were more fun than that,” said the Fourth Finger. “We thought you were our friend.”

But Thumb just shook its head. “I do not care what you say,” it answered, “I will not steal.”

“Then you cannot hang around with us!” shouted the other four fingers, “And you cannot be our friend.” So they went off in a group by themselves and left Thumb alone.

At first they thought Thumb would follow them and beg them to take it back. But Thumb knew they were wrong and stood fast.

And that is why today the thumb stands apart from the other four fingers!