

## Sister Sledgehammer

By Karin McKie

12.6.99

500 Words

My inauguration into stage combat came innocently, well, devilishly, enough at the feet (figuratively and literally) of my sister. She, being three years older and seemingly three feet taller than I, was wont to whomp me on a regular basis (as required in the sibling rivalry regulation book). She would sock me unprovoked, provoke me over socks, and torture me with endless games of 'I'm not touching you.' Using the cunning achieved by those suffering with Napoleonic stature and lack of years, I decided to utilize the power of gray matter to triumph over body mass. I discovered an ally to surmount this classic David and Goliath scenario – the immutable power of the pretend fight.

The first power, the power of the victim, was realized after a particularly brutish session of tickling and zerberts she visited on me. My parents were out shopping, and we were left under the somewhat lax supervision of my grandparents. The row was over, and sis emerged triumphant, leaving my carcass barely able to intake breath. Whilst lying on the floor, attempting to re-train my lungs as to their *raison d'être*, I came to the realization that revenge is indeed a dish best served cold. Several hours later, after a careful repast of PB and J's and untouched for hours, I unexpectedly and with malice aforethought erupted into a wailing unheard of outside Jerusalem. Grandma and Pop-Pop came rushing to my aid, banishing my sister to her room post haste, leaving me to enjoy a battle won. The 'selling of the fight' had been born.

Now I surmised that the vocal manipulation of the victim's power was merely the tip of the iceberg. A marriage of the physical to the oral was imminent, and an addition to the pugilistic lexicon to be desired. I knew what I had to do. Sis was now wary. Her handy punching bag was now unleashing psychological war tactics worthy of Sun Tzu. She left me alone for a while.

When next my sister's journey of pushing the envelope via impinging hormones led her to my tiny body (by way of her fists), I knew I had to step up my arsenal. She hit me and I played dead. Time slowed. I saw the realization wash across her face in infinitesimal increments. Her punch had power. So much power that she had dispatched her little sister. I relished in this response. I only clued her into my ruse after she ran distraught to my parents to confess her capital crime. It was a crystalline moment. The birth of the combat 'knap,' followed by the 'sell.' To this day, I still incorporate a slow, several-beat response to each stage combat hit I receive.

I love my sister dearly, and as adults we have become the best of friends. She chaperoned me getting my ears pierced, taught me to take care of the environment, and listens to me whine. She is also my first stage combat teacher. I thank her for that.