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The Ultimate Battle of Personality

1.

The weakness handshake,

A type of handshake that tells you,

In a trembling voice,

“The power is all yours sir.”

An act that is less of meeting a person,

But meeting the mackerel on the end of a noodle.

Sending the wave of your greeting up an arm,

Like children talking through cans and string.

2.

Now—a death grip!

A greeting from a Boa constrictor,

Contorting the hand with no end in sight.

The overpowering grapple,

Dominating the greeting turned wrestling match.

The hand forced into submission—

Ding! Ding! Ding!

The mangled hand returned to it's rightful owner.

3.

An uncomfortable attempt to be close,
One hand in a shake, the other in awkward physical contact,
Either a begging hand on the wrist
Or a hand on the shoulder,
Seemingly endless intrusion of personal space—
A desperate false friend.

4.

One and done.
“Move along, peasant.”
Dreadful to meet you.
Over before it started.
No respect.
Quickest greeting—shortest memory.

5.

“Get it over with, please!” The person thinks,
Cowering away from someone a million feet taller.
Shy eyes focused on the hands

Worried that they will not connect.

A mystery for the coward:

The hands may meet,

But the people never did.

Reflection

1. The first stanza is about a handshake that is too weak—often called the “limp fish” shake. This is about a passive and timid person. The trembling voice and the dialogue “The power is all yours sir” illustrates a timid person that is very submissive. The metaphor about a mackerel is a different way of saying the “limp fish” expression. The simile about kids playing with cans and string creates the image of children. Usually immature and young people shake hands this way.

2. The second stanza is about an overpowering handshake. The diction is very dominating and loud, just like this type of handshake. The sentence about the Boa constrictor is able to create an image of something wrapping around your hand and squeezing it to illustrate the handshake. The comparison to a wrestling match is able to illustrate how the dominant person is trying to hurt and force your hand into submission.

3. The third stanza is about a very uncomfortable handshake with too much physical contact. This stanza is all one sentence, just like this type of handshake is very long and awkward. I used two examples to illustrate what this type of handshake looks like, which everyone has most likely experienced at one point in their lives. The last line “A desperate false friend” symbolizes that most of the time people that do this are going out of their way to be touchy and in your personal space, but are not actually close enough to you to have a different informal greeting for you.

4. The fourth stanza is about someone who believes themselves to be higher than you, just trying to quickly shake everyone's hands for appearance. The syntax illustrates the many, short handshakes that the person is giving everyone. The diction in this stanza shows the lack of respect and feeling of superiority with words such as "peasant" and "dreadful."

5. The last stanza is about a shy person cowering away from the person they are shaking hands with. The syntax in this stanza is longer than normal, showing how the shy person thinks the handshake is taking forever and wants it to be over. Diction is used to show that this person is very nervous, such as the phrase "million feet taller" and "worried." The dramatic ending illustrates how these people aren't actually meeting since the person is so scared.