

The Magic Chair

Mihir was very fidgety since morning. First he sat on a mat to study. Then he got up and sat on the bed. Later he went and sat in the kitchen where Grandma was cooking. After a while he started pacing up and down in the balcony trying to memorise something. Soon he ran to a chair and made himself comfortable. Now Grandpa was really annoyed.

“Can’t you sit still in one place? You are just running from one spot to the other. Now if you move from this chair till I tell you....” Even before Grandpa could finish, Mihir asked him, “What shall I observe from this chair?”

“Ask your Grandma” Grandpa replied angrily.

Grandma came out of the kitchen and said to Grandpa, “Sitting in a chair is much easier than getting up in the way that I’m going to ask you to! Even you will not be able to get up!”

This made Grandpa really angry.

He asked Grandma angrily, “So what do you think I am? I won’t be able to get up from a chair? Are you going apply glue to the seat of the chair? Or are you planning to tie me to it?”

Grandma chuckled, “I am not going to do anything of the sort. Yet you will stick to the chair as if glued or tied to it. Do you want to bet?”

Mihir exclaimed enthusiastically, “Grandpa, you must accept the bet! I am sure you will be able to get up as soon as Grandma tells you! And let the bet be some fantastic one. That way we can have lots of fun after you win.”

Grandma widened her eyes and raised her eyebrows to dare Grandpa. Mihir looked at Grandpa and made a sign as if he was 'pushing'.

Now Grandpa got angry. He said, "Mihir, you can bet with your Grandma. Since she is so confident and calm, there must be some scientific reason behind it. Otherwise, she wouldn't have done so."

Grandma glanced at Grandpa and said to Mihir, "Someone seems to be very scared of 'scientific' things. I thought he was very courageous and daring. But..."

Grandpa held up his hands, "Enough...enough! I am a daredevil. I will sit in the chair."

Mihir clapped joyfully.

Grandpa made himself comfortable in the chair. "Okay, now tell me what to do."

"Sit straight.

Place your feet flat on the floor.

Keep your hands at your side or fold your hands...Correct!

Now without placing your hands anywhere and without leaning forward, get up from the chair..."

As soon as Grandma said this, Mihir shouted enthusiastically, "Come on Grandpa..."

Grandpa sat in the chair as instructed by Grandma.

He stroked his moustache and asked, "Now tell me, if I get up in the manner you have just told me, what will you give me? I want a really big prize."

Grandma laughed, "I will give you whatever you say. But first, get up..."

Grandpa strongly pressed his feet on the floor and applied force.

He made funny faces, gulped, tightened his muscles and made a great effort to get up.

But no!

He was stuck to the chair as if glued to it. He could not move an inch. Grandpa became restless and irritated.

He didn't know what to do.

He saw that Grandma was momentarily distracted and decided to lean forward and get up.

But just then Grandma said, "No cheating please."

Grandpa slumped into the chair again and said, "It's surprising. Is this a magic chair?"

Why is this happening?

Why can't I do it?"

Grandma patted him on the shoulder and said, "You can't do it? Never mind. Nobody can do it."

When we sit, the centre of gravity of the body is in the chair. If we want to stand that centre has to be in our feet. Without leaning forward the centre of this gravitational force does not come to our feet. So unless we lean forward we cannot get up. Isn't that so?"

Grandpa agreed and laughed heartily. But Mihir looked confused.

Grandpa explained to him, "The weight of the body is equally distributed around the centre of gravity of the body. During any action of the body the centre of gravity of the body and the perpendicular line from there going towards the ground should be on the feet, that is, on a support, whereby we keep our balance."

Now Mihir's face brightened. He said, "If it is applicable to everything then it must be applicable to all living as well as non-living objects. Isn't it?"

Grandma laughed loudly when she heard this and said, "Absolutely! But some living beings sit in a chair and suddenly become non-living. And then..."

Grandpa jumped up from the chair and said, "And then.... they don't get a big prize!"

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