

Jess E

### The life-threatening danger of swinging on the back legs of a chair

Every school has its own rendition in which swinging on a chair has resulted in someone knocking on death's door; whether it was a teacher tragically falling victim to the nefarious legs while passing by, or a student putting too much faith in the treacherous force of gravity holding them – temporarily - upright.

I, myself, have heard many interpretations of this matter in my time. My friend's Spanish teacher ended up with two broken fingers and a broken thumb (the thumb, or *digitus primus manus*, is actually not medically categorised as a finger) and her friend's friend's tutor wound up with a shattered window and an amputated knee cap. However, I am one of the few bodies that has witnessed the affair with my very own eyes.

Before I start, I feel the need to address that balancing on the rear two chair legs is an art in itself – finding the perfect angle in which you're able to let go of the table and hover precariously in the air is not as easy as one might imagine.

To set the scene: This story took place when I was eight years of age, fresh into year three. We were in maths, learning column addition and subtraction. The boy sat opposite me was named Zachary Austen and was infamous for his fascination with books; licking them, to be precise. For this reason, he was better known as 'Lickary' - or 'Licky' for short – and for the authenticity of the story, that's what I'll call him.

Licky was sat to my right and we were having a debate over which juice is better: orange or apple. Licky was arguing rather pointlessly in favour of orange juice – which is incorrect, by the way. Nonetheless, I had already categorised his opinion as pointless, because if one enjoys the taste of books, then who's to say they are a valid judge of fruit juices?

However, Licky felt very strongly about the juice of oranges, because while explaining the importance of orange juice on cereal, the legs of his chair began to lift. They stayed there, poised above the ground all throughout his very detailed reenactment of the time he made his own orange juice in May of 2016. It was when I pointed out that apple juice can also be made by hand, that Licky's emotions got the better of him. He gripped the table with his book-wielding fingers ( *digitus primus manus* included ) and pushed backwards.

If this whole interaction had happened minutes earlier, the back of his chair would have collided with the wall and this story would cease to exist. As it was, however, our teacher Mrs Norman was innocently walking past at the time. It was later described as a wrong-place-at-the-wrong-time type of situation, and in this case it was Mrs Norman's left middle toe that was in the wrong place, and indeed at the wrong time.

To spare you the predictable recounting of screaming and shouting, I will fast forward to four months later, when I first witnessed this exact story being told to a lower year in the computing suite. Only then did I learn that Mrs Norman was left sporting a toe-plate for two months.

Since then, that toe-plate has evolved into a boot and even a permanent cast, until it was said that Mrs Norman was left middle-toe-less.

My favourite depiction consisted of a magical portal in the place where her toe once was. It was said that naughty children who swung on the rear legs of their seats were sent into this portal to a land without chocolate.

To this day, I haven't heard much about Licky – he moved schools shortly after the incident. I hope, however, that he has found peace with his feelings towards hand-pressed apple juice.