



The Mysterious Toy

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Nary and Sokha were excited to see Aunt San return from the city. She was a scientist, so she always brought interesting toys for them to play with.



'Aunt San, did you bring us anything?' they asked.

'Of course,' Aunt San replied with a smile. She gave each child a small package.



Sokha opened his package and found a small, metal car inside.

'Wow!' Sokha said. 'Thank you!'

'You're welcome,' Aunt San replied. 'It is made of iron.'

'Neat!' Sokha said. 'Why is that important, the part about it being made of iron?'

'Oh, you'll see,' Aunt San said mysteriously, as she watched Nary open her



package.

Inside, Nary found two shiny pieces of shiny metal—and they were stuck to one another.

'I wonder what kind of toy this is,' Nary thought.

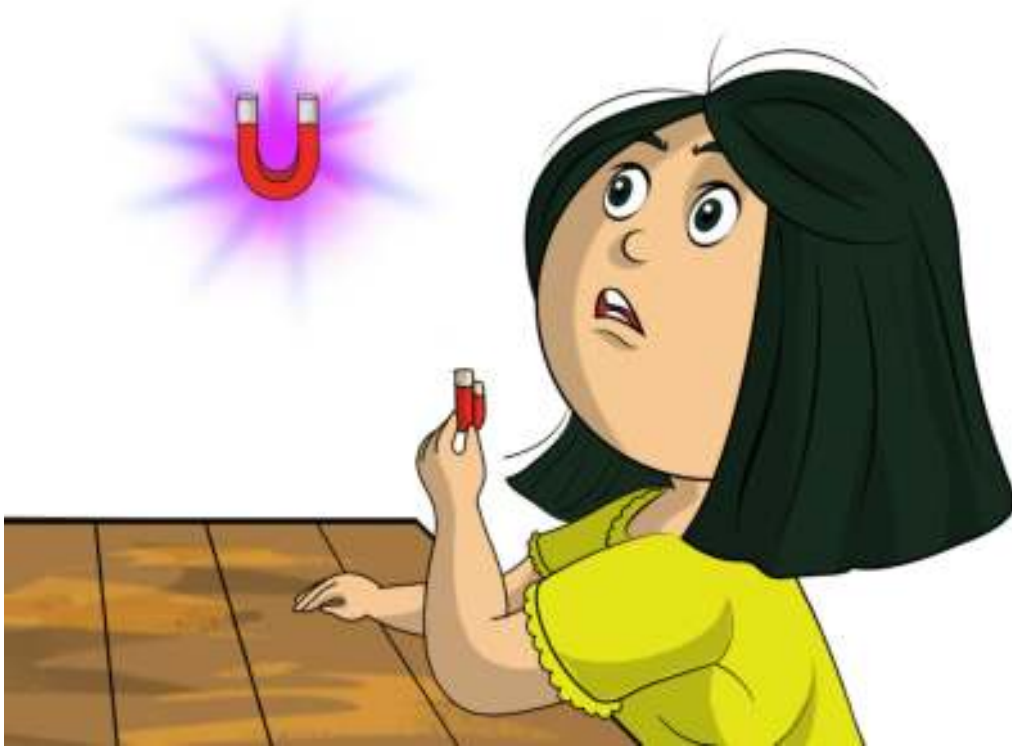


Nary gently pulled on the two pieces of metal, but they were stuck together tightly.

Then she tried twisting the two pieces—and they moved!

‘That’s weird,’ Nary thought, ‘I hope I didn’t break it.’

When she let go of one of the pieces pieces, it snapped back to its original position.



'Could they be magic?' Nary thought. 'No, there has to be a better explanation. But...what?'



Sokha noticed Nary staring at her new toy. 'What are those things?' he asked.

'What do they do?'

'I don't know,' responded Nary. 'I'm trying to figure it out.'

Sokha sat down next to Nary and put his car down on the table nearby. Suddenly, the car began to move toward Nary's pieces of metal—all by itself!



The car rolled all the way over until it was stuck to the metal pieces. Nary pulled the car away from them, and she felt the same sticky feeling she felt when she tried pulling the two metal pieces apart. It was as if there was an invisible force pulling the car and metal pieces together!

'I wonder if anything else will stick to these pieces of metal,' Nary said.



'Let's find out!' Sokha responded. He jumped off the chair and began gathering objects from the house.



Sokha returned with his hands full of objects to test. 'Let's try this book first,' Sokha said. He moved it closer and closer to the pieces of metal. But nothing happened!



'Hmm, let's try this key,' Nary said.

As she moved the key closer to the pieces of metal, Nary could feel it being pulled towards them. She let go of the key, and it slid across the table to the mysterious objects and stuck there. It worked!

Next, Sokha moved a spool of yarn close to the metal pieces, but nothing happened.



Aunt San returned and watched the children as they tested objects.

'I see you like the magnets!' she said. 'Have you figured out how they work?'

'When we put the toy car and a key near them, it's like a force pulls them together.' Nary answered. 'But nothing happens with the book or the spool of yarn.'



'What clever scientists you are!' Aunt San said. 'You're conducting scientific experiments!'

'Now,' she added, 'what do the car and the key have in common? And how are they different from the book or the spool?'

Nary and Sokha thought about this for awhile and whispered back and forth. Then Nary said: 'Metal! The car and key are made of



metal.'

'But the book and spool are not,' Sokha added.



'Correct!' Aunt San said.

'Magnets can stick to certain types of metal, but not to other things.'

'So is this what you do for work, Aunt San?' Nary asked. 'Play with magnets and toy cars?'

'And books, of course,' Aunt San said.

'But the magnet doesn't work on the book,' Sokha said.



'No, but you can still open it and read it!' Aunt San said, and they all laughed.

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Original Story

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