**On Time, Every Time!**

It was the first day at Greenfield High, and the air buzzed with excitement. Children came in with fresh books, shiny shoes, and happy faces. But—uh-oh!—almost 100 students came late!

The Principal, Mr. Oliver Parker, stood near the gate with a smile, nodding gently at each student. He didn’t say anything. “It’s the first day,” he thought. “Let’s give them a chance.” Mr. Parker instructed the PT teachers to keep a record.

But day after day, things didn’t change much. Every morning, 80 to 90 children still came late. The PT teachers were busy writing names in the “Tardy Log Book.”

Finally, Mr. Parker had had enough. He knew he had to act. He gathered everyone for a special assembly.

The students gathered in the auditorium, whispering and wondering, “What’s this about?”

Mr. Parker walked up to the stage and spoke gently, but firmly.

“Good morning, my dear students. I want to share a story with you today. It’s called…”

**The Timely Mangoes**

Once upon a time, in a sunny forest near Varanasi, lived a kind and wise elephant named Subhadda. He was loved by all the animals—not just because he was big and strong, but because he was always on time.

Now, in that forest grew a giant mango tree, full of golden, juicy mangoes. Every year, Subhadda would say:

“When the sun touches the top of the mango tree, it’s time for the Mango Feast! Be on time!”

The animals got excited. The deer, rabbits, squirrels, and bears all came early on the big day. They danced and giggled under the mango tree.

But oh no! Chanchal the monkey was too busy playing.  
Suku the sloth was too slow.  
Mithu the parrot wouldn’t stop chatting with his friends.

By the time they arrived, the best mangoes were already shared.

Subhadda said kindly, “Friends, I kept my word. The mangoes were ready when the sun touched the top branch. The early ones enjoyed the best fruit. Next time, try to be on time.”

Chanchal, Suku, and Mithu felt sorry. From that day, they changed their ways.

Back in the auditorium, Mr. Parker asked the children:

“What did you learn from the story?”

In one loud, happy voice, they said,  
**“We must come to school on time!”**

“And what happens if you’re late?”

**“We’ll miss our classes!”**

Mr. Parker smiled. “So, can I take it as a promise?”

**“Yes, Sir!”** the students shouted.

And guess what? Day by day, things improved.

After a week, only 40 students came late.  
By the end of the month, just 10 students were still late.

Mr. Parker sat with Ms. Lydia Bennett, the vice-principal.

“Let’s meet these 10 students and talk. Arrange for a meeting in the conference hall with them,” he said.

Ms. Lydia Bennett arranged the meeting. Everyone assembled in the conference hall. Mr. Parker and Ms. Lydia welcomed the students.

“Good morning, students,” said both Mr. Parker and Ms. Lydia.

“Can any one of you guess why you’ve been called here?”

There was pin-drop silence. Students were looking at each other.

Ms. Lydia added, “It’s all about your late coming.”

Mr. Parker asked, “Why do you think you’re coming late?”

One by one, the children gave reasons like:  
**“I woke up late…”**  
**“There was a function…”**  
**“My auto came late…”**

Mr. Parker nodded and said, “Let me tell you about two of our old students—Alex and Charlie.”

Alex was always on time. He did well in school, and when he grew up, he got a great job.  
Charlie was often late. He was even late for his final exam—and he wasn’t allowed to write it. He failed.

A girl named Sarah raised her hand. “Is punctuality really that important, Sir?”

Mr. Parker smiled and said, “Let’s find out with some situations. You tell me what would happen.”

* **Maya is very sick. The doctor promised to come at 9 o’clock but comes at 10. What will happen?**  
  *“She may get worse!”* said the first child.
* **A flood is coming. The news is shown too late. What will happen?**  
  *“People won’t escape in time!”* said the second.
* **Two trains are on the same track. The signal is not changed on time. What will happen?**  
  *“Crash!”* said the third, eyes wide.
* **You’re not ready when the school bus comes. What will happen?**  
  *“It leaves without me!”* said the fourth.
* **You reach your friend’s party an hour late. What will happen?**  
  *“No cake! No fun!!”* said the fifth, sadly.
* **The school’s Annual Day starts late. What will happen?**  
  *“Everyone will get tired waiting,”* added the sixth.
* **You forget to take a cake out of the oven on time. What will happen?**  
  *“It will burn!”* said the seventh.
* **The fire engine arrives late. What will happen?**  
  *“The fire will spread and the building and people will be destroyed,”* said the eighth in a feeble voice.
* **Your dad reaches his office meeting late. What will happen?**  
  *“The boss will get angry,”* answered the ninth.
* **You reach the railway station after the train leaves. What will happen?**  
  *“I’ll miss my trip!”* said the last student.

Ms. Lydia asked, “So what have you learned today?”

One child said, **“Being on time can save lives!”**  
Another added, **“We won’t miss fun or chances!”**  
And one more said, **“We will be successful!”**

All 10 students apologized. Even Sarah said, “Sir, I promise to be on time now.”

Ms. Lydia then shared about two great leaders who were successful because of their punctuality.

“Do you know who George Washington was?” she asked.

**“Yes! The first U.S. President!”** they replied.

“He was so punctual,” she said, “he fined people who came late! He once said:  
*‘My cook doesn’t ask if guests have come, but if the hour has.’*”

“And Mahatma Gandhi?” she added.  
“He said being late is like stealing someone else’s time. That’s why he was never late—and he became the Father of our Nation.”

Mr. Parker ended the session warmly:  
“Each time you’re on time, you’re showing respect—to your school, your teachers, and yourself. I believe in you all!”

The students smiled brightly.  
**“We’ll do better, Sir!”** they promised.

As Mr. Parker walked out, he looked at the clock and smiled.  
**“Right on time,”** he whispered.