



Reading Junction

How would you feel if you missed your favourite sport event? Let us read a story about a boy named Raju, who missed a chance to watch an important cricket match.

One Saturday afternoon, Raju was sitting in an armchair, feeling really upset. One of his legs was in plaster and he was resting it on a cushioned stool.

'I hate sitting like this. I am fed up!' he said to his mother.

Do you think Raju was upset because he could not watch the test match live in the stadium or because he was unable to move?

'It is all right. You will be fine in a few days,' she said trying to comfort him. 'You can join your friends in

their game of cricket then. If you sit without **fidgeting**, the bones will heal faster. Now, why don't you watch the cricket match on TV, while I go to the kitchen to cook?'



fidgeting moving restlessly



'Idiot,' said Raju. He was very upset. Falling off his bike and breaking his leg was not something he was proud of. Moreover, this had to happen just when his father, his elder brother Renju and he had planned to go and watch a test match between India and Australia. It was supposed to be his first live cricket match at the stadium and Sachin Tendulkar was playing for India. It would have been a dream come true. The sports page in one of the national dailies called him the *Cricket Wizard*. Another paper called him a *Genius*. The match was scheduled for today and he was going to miss it because of his broken leg.

'I hate this,' said Raju again.

'It's all right,' said his father. 'The match will be telecast live on TV. In fact, you will be able to watch the match better at home than in a crowded stadium.'

'But I still hate sitting like this,' said Raju.

Renju came in with some popcorn and chocolate cake. 'Here, have these,' he said. 'I got them just for you. You can eat while you watch the match on TV. It will cheer you up.'

Raju smiled and started eating the cake.

'We will have to go now, son,' said his father, coming in with his umbrella.

'I will try to get Sachin's autograph for you. How about that?' said Renju to his younger brother.

Raju waved goodbye to them and let his mother switch the TV on for him while he enjoyed the chocolate cake and the popcorn. He watched TV the entire day. Then, his leg began to itch and because of the plaster, he was unable to scratch it. He felt stiff sitting in the same position for hours.

'I don't like sitting idle,' he said to his mother when she came in to see how he was.

'Never mind,' she said. 'It's all right.'

'Everybody seems to be saying that to me today,' thought Raju. 'I do not want a rotten

Why do you think Raju's father said that he would be able to watch the match better at home than in a crowded stadium?



live - an event heard or seen while it is happening

telecast - television broadcast

plaster on my leg. I want to be at the match with dad and Renju. I want to watch Sachin play.'

India won the match. When his father and Renju returned, they both looked very pleased. His father was smiling and Renju was chanting, 'Indians are the best! Indians are the best!'

'Hey, Raju! I bought a hat for you at the stadium,' said his father.

'Did you see Sachin?' asked Raju.

'Of course,' said Renju. 'He scored 200 runs and took two important wickets. Guess what, near the end of the match, he fell down while trying to take a catch. They had to help him get off the ground.'

'I hope he is not badly hurt,' said Raju. 'So, you did not get his autograph?'

'No, sorry. I will try next time,' said Renju.

The next day, the headlines in the newspapers announced that Sachin had injured his arm. He was out of the game for the next two weeks.

Two weeks later, Raju had to go to the hospital for a check-up. The doctor wanted to see his leg and put a new plaster on it. Raju sat with his mother in the waiting room.

'It is your turn now, Raju,' said the nurse.

Raju went into a smaller room, where another nurse cut the plaster along the side with a pair of strong scissors. After that, the doctor examined his leg and said it was healing quickly. The nurse put a fresh plaster around his leg. His mother took him back to the waiting room and sat with him while waiting for the bill.

'Two more weeks, Raju, and you will be playing cricket again,' said the nurse.

His mother had gone to another room to fix an appointment with the doctor.

'So, do you like cricket?' asked a man who was sitting behind him. Raju had not noticed him. As his leg was placed on a stool in front of him, he was not able to turn around. He turned a little and said, 'I love cricket! It is my life.

One day, I want to be a great cricketer like Sachin.'

The man behind him laughed and said, 'You admire Sachin, do you?'

'Oh yes! He is my hero!' said Raju proudly.

'Next person, please,' called out the nurse.

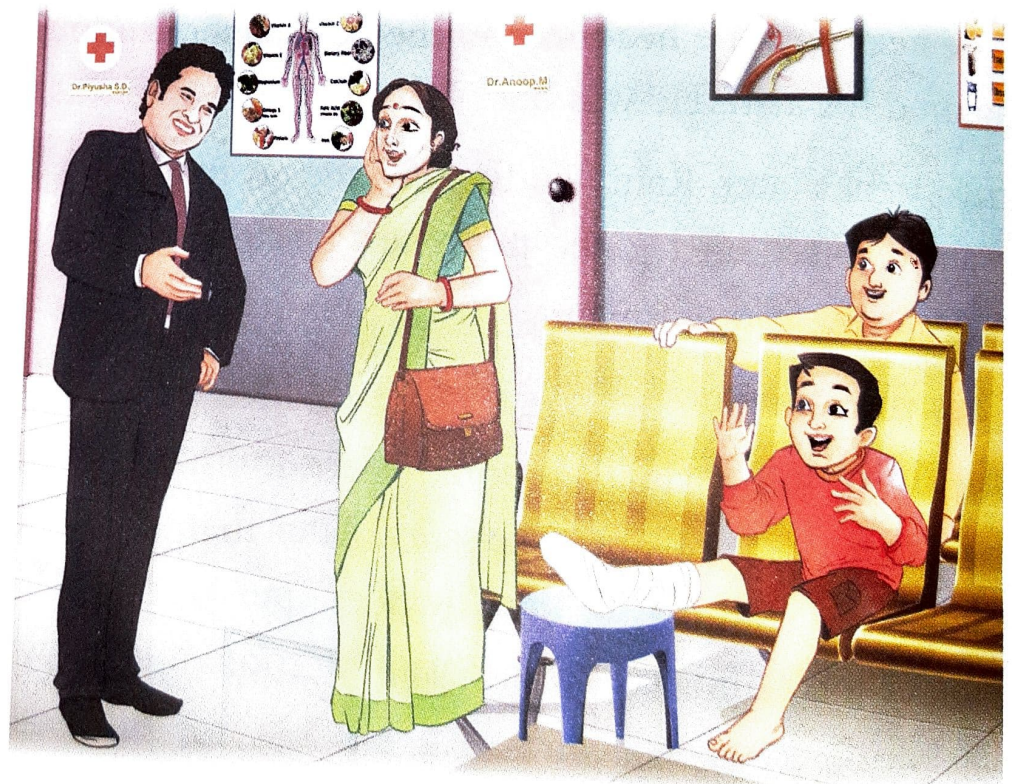
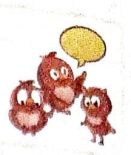
The man behind him got up and was now visible to Raju. 'Sachin!' he **gasp**ed.
'Mummy! Look, who is here!'

His mother and the nurse came running to see what the matter was. When they realised who it was, they were **tongue-tied** and did not know what to say. Sachin had come to the hospital to get his injured arm checked. Raju turned to Sachin and said, 'Will you give me your autograph? Otherwise my friends at school will never believe me if I tell them that I met you.'

'Of course, I will!' said Sachin. He wrote on Raju's plaster, 'To Raju, from his hero. All the best, Sachin Tendulkar.' He chatted with Raju and his mother for a while before he went in to see the doctor.

When the plaster was removed from his leg two weeks later, Raju hung it up in his room. Every morning, he looked at Sachin's autograph before he left for school.

Who do you think the man behind Raju was?



– Savithri Pandiyan

gasped: caught breath with an open mouth due to astonishment

tongue-tied: unable to speak clearly