

13. **The Ultimate All-Purpose Excuse**

(Entering the room, huffing and puffing, obviously out of breath)

I know I'm supposed to be on time, and truly I believe punctuality is next to cleanliness which we all know is next to godliness, but . . . as I was on my way to class, I heard a shrill little whimper, the sound, obviously, of a wounded animal, a kitten perhaps. Knowing how you feel about cats, I knew you would hold me remiss if I did not at least look to see if some poor kitty needed my help.

The sounds were tiny and weak, but I finally tracked them down, to just inside the alcove by Dr. Jones' door. There I found the fluffiest little calico kitten, maybe all of six weeks old, trembling in terror. Disoriented, undoubtedly stunned by the loudness of the tardy bell, it shook so it nearly broke my heart. I thought it might have crawled inside the doors and became trapped and frightened.

I knew you would want me to see it safely back to its owner, so I picked it up tenderly and began to go door-to-door, looking for its owner. Finally, at a frame house nearly two blocks away, an elderly lady came to the door in tears. Her kitten, Patches, her only companion, was missing. So certain that she would find its poor flattened body, run over by some crazy, fast-driving teenager, she hadn't even looked. Soon her tears of sadness turned to tears of gladness.

Even though she offered me milk and homemade cookies, your class is so important to me that I refused gracefully and rushed back to school, running all the way, and that's why I'm tardy today.

288 words