A GOOD CHOICE

It was the middle of the week. Srividhya, a girl in Grade 5, had her turn to write on the board. Just as she finished, Ma'am walked into the classroom.

"Good morning, Ma'am!" the whole class greeted cheerfully.

"Good morning, everyone," Ma'am replied with a smile. Then she looked around the room and said, "Now, who hasn't finished the homework I gave yesterday? Please step outside."

A few students slowly stood up and walked out of the class. Ma'am didn't say anything to them and continued with the lesson as usual. About ten minutes before the class ended, she said, "Take your homework outside with you. I'll come around to check."

Srividhya sat still, pretending to look through her bag. She hadn't done her homework but was hoping Ma'am wouldn't notice. Her hands trembled as she flipped through her notebook, trying to buy time.

As Ma'am walked past her desk, Srividhya's benchmate raised her hand. "Ma'am, I think you missed checking Srividhya's homework."

Srividhya shot her benchmate an angry glance. She hesitated, then slowly stood up and said in a quiet voice, "Ma'am… I didn't do the homework."

Ma'am's expression changed. "Srividhya, the others at least told the truth. You tried to hide it," she said, her voice firm. "Go outside."

Srividhya's eyes filled with tears. She felt sad and sorry. Just then, the principal passed by the classroom and paused at the door.

"What's going on here?" he asked.

Ma'am explained the situation. The principal looked at Srividhya and said, "Don't do that again next time."

When the bell rang, Ma'am called Srividhya aside. "Don't do this again," she said gently. Then she pointed to the board. "Look at what you wrote earlier. Read it, and remember to follow it."

Srividhya turned and looked at the board. The words she had written that morning stared back at her:

"Honesty is the best policy."