



Twist

Parking Meters

Jimmy Prune sat on a street curb outside the ice cream parlor. A green compact car pulled into a parking space nearby. Out stepped Mr. Evans, his neighbor, jingling some coins in his pocket. He bent down to check the meter.

He turned toward Jimmy Prune and said, “Want to make an easy dollar? I’ll give you eight quarters. Just drop one in the meter every fifteen minutes. When I get back, whatever’s left is yours to buy some ice cream.”

Jimmy Prune grinned. “It’s a deal,” he said.

Mr. Evans handed him the coins. “See you soon, Jimmy Prune,” he said.

After his neighbor left, Jimmy stuck a quarter into the meter and turned the crank. An arrow pointed to **15** in the little window.

He sat back down on the curb and watched a line of ants crawl from a crack in the sidewalk. When he thought fifteen minutes had passed, he got up and walked back to the row of meters.

But now, instead of one, there were two green compact cars parked along the street.

“Uh-oh,” he said. “Which one’s the one?”

Zip! Clink! went the meter by the first car. TIME EXPIRED flashed in the little window. Quickly, Jimmy Prune put in a quarter.

Zip! Clink! went the meter by the second car, and he popped a quarter in that meter, too.

Back on the curb, Jimmy Prune watched a worm wiggle in a puddle. Fifteen minutes later, *Zip! Clink!* went the first meter. *Zip! Clink!* went the second meter, and Jimmy Prune inserted a quarter into each one.

At that moment, a meter monitor drove up the street in her small white cart. She checked a meter a half block away and started writing a ticket for yet another green compact.

“Uh-oh,” said Jimmy Prune. “Could that be the one?”

He ran up to the meter and stuffed a quarter into the slot.

The meter monitor gave him a look. “You just saved someone a big parking fine,” she said, crumpling up the ticket.

Jimmy Prune checked his quarters. Only three left. He sighed with relief when a tall woman climbed into the first green compact and drove away.

But when time ran out on the second meter, he had to spend another quarter. *Zip! Clink!*—the third meter also blinked TIME EXPIRED, and there went another coin.

“Thanks, Jimmy Prune,” a voice called. Mr. Evans stood by the second compact. He got in, waved, and drove off.

Jimmy Prune sat on the curb, flipping his last coin. “Rats,” he muttered.

“Not enough change for an ice cream cone.”

Farther up the street, he spotted the meter monitor writing a ticket for a blue van. The van belonged to his mother!

“Wait!” Jimmy Prune cried, rushing up to the meter.

The meter monitor slapped her ticket book shut. Jimmy smiled as he jammed his last quarter into the slot.