

# Twists



**Douglas Evans**

He also wrote MVP: Magellan Voyage Project,  
The Elevator Family, and Classroom at the End of The Hall

# **Twists**

**Twist: A short silly story  
with a surprise at the end**



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*"good stories; good tunes"*

**Twists**

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**Douglas Evans**



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**Twists**

**For Charlie**

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## Twist One Cold Hands

**J**immy Prune stood on the snowy school playground. He wore a wool coat, wool hat, and rubber boots. But his hands were bare.

"My hands are *sooooo* cold," said Jimmy Prune. "My hands are *sooooo* cold."

A girl with bangs, braids, and braces tossed a snowball at the swings. "Rub your hands together, Jimmy Prune," she said. "Your hands will warm up if you rub them fast."

Jimmy Prune held his hands together. He rubbed them up and down. His hands got warmer, but they soon grew tired.

"My hands are *sooooo* cold," said Jimmy

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Prune. "My hands are *sooooo* cold."

Jimmy Prune's best friend, Loud Larry, was stomping a giant L in the snow. "Blow on your hands, Jimmy Prune," he called out. "If you blow on them, they won't be cold."

Jimmy Prune put his hands over his mouth. Smoke poured through his fingers as he blew. His hands got warmer, but he soon ran out of breath.

"My hands are *sooooo* cold," said Jimmy Prune. "My hands are *sooooo* cold."

"Shake your hands in the air, Jimmy Prune," called Marsha, a fifth-grader, who was building a two-headed snowman. "That gets your blood flowing. Shake your hands, Jimmy Prune."

Jimmy Prune spread his arms. He flapped them like a penguin. His hands got warmer, but his arms soon wore out.

"My hands are *sooooo* cold," said Jimmy Prune. "My hands are *sooooo* cold."

Mrs. Friendly, Jimmy Prune's teacher, walked over. "Why don't you stick your hands in your pockets, Jimmy Prune?" she asked. "Your pockets are snug and warm."

Jimmy Prune sniffed. "I can't. I can't put my hands in my pockets," he said. A tear flowed from his eye and froze on his nose.

The teacher looked puzzled. "Why ever not?" she asked.

"Because my pockets are full," Jimmy Prune



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replied. "I have my mittens in there."

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## **Twist Two** **Goose Bumps**

**J**immy Prune sat in the TV room with his babysitter, Marsha. While Marsha watched TV, Jimmy Prune grabbed a pencil and some paper.

"I'm going to make a list," he said, and on the top of the paper he wrote:

### **Ways To Get Goose Bumps**

Jimmy Prune walked to the window and opened it. "Now for test number one," he said.

Cold air flowed into the room. After a minute, Jimmy Prune checked both arms. Small bumps covered every bit of skin.

"There!" he said. "Goose bumps!"

Then he wrote on his list:

#### **1. Cold**

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Next, Jimmy Prune ran up the stairs to the attic. The large room had one light bulb that lit the sloping roof and bare wood floor.

"Now for test number two," Jimmy Prune said.

He switched off the light, and the attic turned inky black. Something clicked in the corner. A creature skittered across the floor.

Jimmy Prune turned and ran out the door. Again, he checked his arms.

"More goose bumps!" he said

This time he wrote on his list:

## 2. Scary things

Jimmy Prune now stood at the top of the stairs. He sat on the railing.

"Here goes test number three," he said, and he slid all the way down to the bottom of the stairway.

"Wahooooo!"

At the bottom, Jimmy Prune rechecked his arms. "Goose bumps again!" he said.

Then he wrote on his list:

## 3. Excitement

Next, Jimmy Prune ran into the kitchen. "Test number four," he said.

He opened the kitchen door and shut it. *Squeak! Squeak!* went the hinges. He opened and shut the door again. *Squeak-squeak! Squeak-squeak!*

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“Success!” said Jimmy Prune, checking his arms. “More goose bumps!”

And he wrote on his list:

## **4. Squeaky noises**

Now Jimmy Prune looked around the kitchen. “What next?” he said. He was out of ideas for ways to get goose bumps.

At that moment, Marsha shouted from the TV room. Her voice sounded mad. “Jimmy Prune! Shut the window! Stop running in the attic! Stop shouting on the stairs! And stop playing with the door!”

Jimmy Prune checked his arms. “Goose bumps!” he said.

Then he wrote the last item on his list:

## **5. Marsha scolding**

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## **Twist Three** **Solo Baseball**

**J**immy Prune stood alone on his front yard. He held a whiffle ball and a plastic baseball bat.

“Now up to bat, number one...Jimmy Prune!” he announced. “Last of the ninth! Two out! Jimmy Prune’s team needs one run to win the game!”

Jimmy Prune tossed the ball upward. He swung the bat. But the whiffle ball landed on the grass.

“Strike one!” he called.

Jimmy Prune’s best friend, Loud Larry, rode up the street on his bike. He stopped to watch the baseball game. “Keep your eyes on the ball when

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you swing, Jimmy Prune!" he said. "Watch the ball, and you'll clobber it."

Jimmy Prune threw the ball up a second time. He swung and missed again.

"Strike two!" he called.

Mr. Evans, Jimmy Prune's neighbor, was mowing his lawn. He stopped to watch the game, too.

"Take a good even swing," Jimmy Prune," he called out. "You'll hit that ball if you keep the bat level."

Jimmy Prune tossed the ball up a third time. He kept his eyes on the ball. He swung evenly, and—*whack!*— the ball flew across the yard.

"It's hit deep!" Jimmy Prune screamed.

He raced toward an old sock that served for first base.

"Jimmy Prune reached first safely!" he said.

"Now he's going to second!"

He ran toward a towel marking second base.

"Go, Jimmy Prune!" Loud Larry shouted.

"Great hit!" said Mr. Evans.

"The fans are going wild!" said Jimmy Prune.

"Jimmy Prune tagged second and goes for a triple!"

He raced toward third base that was a bare spot in the grass.

A girl with bangs, braids, and braces rolled up on her skateboard. "Run, Jimmy Prune! Run!"



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she shouted.

"Jimmy Prune is trying for a home run!" Jimmy Prune said. "If he makes it, his team wins the game!"

"Go, Jimmy Prune! Run!" shouted Mr. Evans.

"You can do it, Jimmy Prune," called Loud Larry.

"Hurrah for Jimmy Prune," cheered the Girl With Bang, Braids, and Braces.

Jimmy Prune slid toward the paper plate home plate.

The fans grew quiet. They watched Jimmy Prune stand up, kick the grass, and shake his fist.

"What's wrong, Jimmy Prune?" asked Mr. Evans. "That was a great hit."

"And a terrific slide!" added Larry.

A woman wearing a white hat walked by on the sidewalk. "Don't worry about those grass stains on your pants, Jimmy Prune," she called out. "They'll come out with a good washing."

"Did you hurt yourself, Jimmy Prune?" asked the Girl With Bangs, Braids, and Braces.

Jimmy Prune picked up the whiffle ball and plastic. He walked toward his front door.

"I'm not hurt, and I don't care about grass stains," he said. "I'm mad because I was out at home plate and lost the game."

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## Twist Four Exploring

**J**immy Prune grabbed his hiking stick and hiked out of his backyard.

"I'm going exploring," he said. "I'll become a famous explorer."

Jimmy walked until he came to a creek. He stuck his stick in the muddy bank.

"I, Jimmy Prune, name this the Jimmy Prune River," he said.

A fish flopped in the water, as Jimmy waded across the creek. With muddy shoes, he began to explore some more.

Soon Jimmy came to a grassy hill. He climbed to the top and stuck his stick in the tall

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grass.

"I name this Mount Jimmy Prune," he said.

A hawk flew by, as Jimmy marched across the hill. He ran down the other side, but tripped at the bottom. Green streaks stained his blue jeans, as he continued to explore.

Next, Jimmy came to a wire fence. He crawled under the fence and stood in a cow pasture.

"I, Jimmy Twist, name this Jimmy Pruneland."

A cow mooed, while Jimmy crossed the pasture. He climbed the far fence, but his shirt snagged on the wire. With a tear in his shirt, he started exploring some more.

Now Jimmy hiked down a dusty road. Blackberry bushes lined the sides.

"I name this the Jimmy Prune Highway," he said.

A rabbit scrambled into the bushes, while Jimmy picked some berries. His fingers turned purple, before he started exploring again.

The road ended at a pond. Five ducks bobbed on the water.

"I name this Lake Jimmy Prune," said Jimmy.

The ducks quacked, as he lay down on the edge of the pond to take a nap. Exploring was hard work.

Evening came. Jimmy awoke and stood on the edge of Lake Jimmy Prune.

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He looked right and left. "I must get home," he said. "But which way do I go?"

Then he noticed his purple fingers and remembered. He ran down Jimmy Prune Highway, past the blackberry bushes.

"Now which way?" he said.

He looked at his torn shirt and remembered. He climbed over the wire fence and raced across Jimmy Pruneland.

"So which way now?"

He checked the green on his blue jeans. Then he ran up Mount Jimmy Prune and down the other side.

"Now which way?" he said.

He saw the mud on his shoes and remembered. He waded across Jimmy Prune River and stood on the far bank.

"Now how do I go?" he said.

He searched his clothes for a clue. But he spotted nothing.

At that moment, a voice called through the trees, "Jimmy Pruuuuune! Time for supper!"

Jimmy smiled. Then he ran toward his backyard.

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## Twist Five Sweeping

**M**rs. Friendly stood in front of her class. "It's time to do our classroom jobs," she said. "This week it's Jimmy Prune's turn to sweep the sidewalk outside the door."

Jimmy Prune groaned. He rose from his desk and grabbed the yellow broom in the closet. "Sweeping is the worst job at school," he said.

Outside on the sidewalk, he gripped the broom handle with one hand. He stuck the other in his pocket. He moved the broom back and forth.

Loud Larry stood in the doorway. "Jimmy Prune, that's not how to sweep," he called out. "You have to hold the broom with both hands. Let a pro show you how."

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Larry took the broom. He swished it across the sidewalk.

"I see. I see," said Jimmy Prune. "You do that very well,"

Loud Larry swept another row before handing the broom back and returning to the room.

"Sweeping is the hardest class job," Jimmy Prune said.

He spread his legs. He moved the broom forward and backward as if it were a croquet mallet.

The Girl With Bangs, Braids, and Braces stepped out of the classroom. "You're using that broom all wrong, Jimmy Prune," she said. "Here give it to me. Now watch."

The girl's braids swished left and right, as she swished the broom left and right.

"I see. I see," said Jimmy Prune. "You are very good at sweeping."

After the girl left, Jimmy Prune shoved the broom forward as if it were a wide push broom. He spotted, Mr. Good, the principal, walking toward him.

"That's no way to sweep, Jimmy Prune," said the principal. "Swing the broom like a hockey stick. I'll show you."

Mr. Good swept a strip of sidewalk. He stepped backward and swept another.

"I see. I see," said Jimmy Prune. "That's very



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helpful.”

The principal took two more sweeps and returned the broom. “Keep up the good work, Jimmy Prune,” he said.

Most of the sidewalk was now clean. But not all of it. Jimmy Prune bent and grabbed the broom by the bristles. He whisked it back and forth as if he were dusting off home plate.

Marsha came out of the fifth-grade classroom. “Jimmy Prune, you’re not sweeping right,” she said.

The fifth-grader snatched the broom. She began to sweep. “Watch how I do it, Jimmy Prune,” she said.

“I see. I see,” said Jimmy Prune. “I see. I see.”

By the time Marsha stopped sweeping, the sidewalk was all clean.

Jimmy Prune took the broom and returned to his classroom. “Sweeping is the worst job at school,” he repeated. “In twenty weeks it will be my turn again. By that time, I think I’ll have forgotten how to do it.”

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## Twist Six Sweets

**J**immy Prune walked through the mall with his babysitter, Marsha.

"Can I buy some sweets with the dollar I found?" he asked.

Marsha gave him a second dollar. "I'll wait here, Jimmy Prune," she said. "Don't be gone long."

Jimmy Prune's first stop was the ice cream counter. A girl in a red apron asked, "What will it be, Jimmy Prune?"

"One rainbow swirl ice cream cone," he said.

The girl handed Jimmy Prune the cone. He licked it quickly.

"Rats!" he said.

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"What's wrong, Jimmy Prune?" asked the girl.

Jimmy Prune held his head. "The ice cream is good, but it made my brain sore," he said.

Jimmy Prune walked to a pop machine. He bought a can of root beer. He drank it quickly and held his belly

"Rats," he said.

Mr. Evans walked past. "What's wrong, Jimmy Prune?" he asked.

"The pop I drank gave me a bellyache," Jimmy Prune said.

Next Jimmy Prune entered a candy store. "One bar of taffy," he said to the clerk.

Jimmy Prune chewed the candy. "Rats!" he said.

"What's the problem, Jimmy Prune?" asked the clerk.

Jimmy Prune held his jaw. "The taffy made my teeth hurt," he said.

Jimmy Prune continued through the mall. He stopped at a gum machine and brought a gumball. He chewed the gum and blew a huge bubble. Poof! The bubble burst.

"Rats!" said Jimmy Prune.

The Woman Wearing a White Hat sat on a bench nearby. "Are you OK, Jimmy Prune?" she asked.

Jimmy Prune pulled at the gum that was stuck in his hair. "The gum makes my scalp smart," said

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Jimmy Prune.

Jimmy Prune returned to Marsha. "Did you enjoy your sweets, Jimmy Prune?" the babysitter asked.

Jimmy Prune shook his head. "I'm through with sweets," he said. "They are too painful."

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## **Twist Seven** **Rumbling Stomach**

**L**unchtime was near. As Jimmy Prune sat at his desk, his stomach cramped. He placed a hand on his lap.

“Rats! Not again!” he groaned.

From under his desk came noises.

*RRRRR! SQUEAK! SPUT! FFT! RRRRR!*

Jimmy Prune blushed to his toes. He knew what would happen next.

First, the Girl With Bangs, Braids, and Braces giggled. Then Loud Larry laughed his big booming laugh. The rest of the class followed with snickers.

Mrs. Friendly sat behind her desk, grading papers. She turned to check the clock above the

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blackboard. "Lunchtime, class," she said. "Please line up."

Jimmy Prune trudged to the end of the line that formed at the door. "Why-oh-why?" he asked himself. "Why must my stomach make that humiliating racket?"

The next day it happened again. Minutes before lunchtime, Jimmy Prune's belly tightened. He held his breath. He pounded his lap with his fist. But the eruption came anyway.

*RRRRR! SQUEAK! SPUT! FFT! RRRRR!*

Laughter filled the classroom, louder than yesterday.

"Lunchtime, class!" Mrs. Friendly announced.

In the lunchroom, Jimmy Prune ate alone. "Why-oh-why?" he kept saying.

He chomped into his sandwich and chewed hard. When he swallowed, he made a discovery.

"My gut stopped growling," he said. "When I ate something, it got silent."

The following day, Jimmy Prune came to school with his pockets stuffed with soda crackers. When lunchtime came, he crammed five crackers into his mouth.

He checked the clock and grinned. "Twelve o'clock, and my belly is quiet," he said.

Yet something was wrong. At five minutes past noon, the teacher remained at her desk,



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grading papers. Jimmy Prune felt the entire class staring at him.

Two minutes later, the Girl With Bangs, Braids, and Braces whispered, "Jimmy Prune, what gives? What happened to the lunch alarm?"

Jimmy Prune could only shrug.

Finally, at a quarter past lunchtime, Mrs. Friendly checked the clock. "We're late for lunch, aren't we?" she said. "Please line up."

*Whoosh!* The students charged toward the door.

Loud Larry stood behind Jimmy Prune. "I thought she'd never dismiss us," he said. "What's wrong with your stomach, Jimmy Prune?"

Jimmy Prune replied with another shrug.

"The lunch alarm," said Larry. "You know, the way your belly makes noises right before lunch."

Jimmy Prune scowled. "Everyone thinks that's a big joke," he said.

"Are you kidding?" said Loud Larry. "Your stomach's the only thing that reminds the teacher it's lunchtime. She gets so busy that she only checks the clock when your stomach sounds off. That's what cracks us up."

Jimmy Prune placed a hand on his belly. "Rats!" he said, as the hungry line marched out the door.

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## Twist Eight Starry Night

**J**immy Prune was camping in his backyard with his babysitter, Marsha. He pointed to the twinkling sky.

"I spy a star that's moving," he said. "I'll call it the Jimmy Prune Star."

"Stars don't move, Jimmy Prune," said Marsha. "You see the night lights of an airplane."

Jimmy Prune kept looking upward. Again he pointed. "I spy another star that's moving," he said. "I'll call that the Jimmy Prune Star."

"Stars don't move, Jimmy Prune," Marsha repeated. "You're now looking at a firefly. The light on its end is blinking."

At that moment, the campfire cracked. Again

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Jimmy Prune pointed to the stars. "I spy another star that's moving," he said. "I'll call that one the Jimmy Prune Star."

"Nope, stars don't move, Jimmy Prune," Marsha reminded him. "You now see a spark from the fire."

Jimmy Prune yawned. He crawled into his sleeping bag. He lay on his back, studying the stars some more. A bright flash streaked across the sky.

"But that star moved," he said. "I'll name that the Jimmy Prune Star."

"That's not a star either, Jimmy Prune," said Marsha. "You saw a meteor. A meteor is a space rock burning up in the earth's air."

Jimmy Prune went to sleep. The next thing he knew it was morning. A bright, blue sky spread over him.

Jimmy Prune shook Marsha awake.

"What is it, Jimmy Prune?" she grumbled.

"Stars do move," Jimmy Prune said.

"What are you talking about?" said the babysitter.

Jimmy Prune pointed to the sunny sky. "See. All the stars have moved away."