



Twist Parking Meters

Jimmy Prune sat on a street curb. A green compact car pulled into a parking space nearby. Mr. Evans got out and checked the parking meter.

“Jimmy Prune, how’d you like to make an easy dollar,” he said. “I’ll give you eight quarters. Plug one into the meter every fifteen minutes. When I get back, you can keep all the money that’s left.”

“It’s a deal,” said Jimmy Prune.

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

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

Jimmy Prune returned to the curb. He watched a line of ants crawl from a crack. When he thought fifteen minutes was up, he walked backed to the row of meter. But he found not one but two green compacts parked along the street.

“Which one’s the one?” he wondered.

Zip! Clink! went the meter by the first car. TIME

EXPIRED appeared in the little window, and Jimmy Prune put in a quarter.

Zip! Clink! went the meter by the second green compact and he stuck a quarter in that meter as well.

Back on the curb, Jimmy Prune watched a worm wiggled 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 white cart. She checked a meter a half block away and began writing a ticket for another green compact

“Could that be the one?” Jimmy Prune asked himself.

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 twenty dollar fine,” she said, crumpling up the ticket.

Jimmy Prune checked his quarters. He had three left. He was glad when a tall woman drove off in the first green compact. But when time ran out on the second meter, he had to spend another quarter. Shortly afterward, time ran out on the third meter and one more coin disappeared.

“Thanks, Jimmy Prune,” he heard a voice say. Mr.

Evans sat in the second compact. He waved and drove away.

Jimmy Prune sat on the curb, flipping the last coin. “Not enough change to buy sweets,” he said.

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, and he rushed up to the meter.

The meter monitor slapped her ticket book shut.

Jimmy smiled as he crammed in his last quarter.