



Twist Cuts

"OK, class, it's lunchtime," Mrs. Friendly said. "Grab your lunch bags and boxes and form a straight line up at the door.

Swoosh!

The twenty students leapt from their desks, grabbed lunches from backpacks hooks, and formed a zig-zagged line at the door.

Jimmy Prune stood somewhere in the middle. "This is a good spot," he told himself. "They always run out of chocolate milk before my whole class gets through the line at the lunch counter."

Just then, Harper stepped out from behind him. "I'm the line leader this week," she said. "So I should be first in line."

Quickly, she darted to the front.

"I'm with Harper," said Jenny, and she cut in line right behind her.

"Rats," muttered Jimmy Prune. "If everyone keeps taking cuts, there won't be one carton of chocolate milk left."

But as he spoke, Michael, in front of him, turned and said, "I forgot my milk

money. Will you save my place, Jimmy Prune?”

Jimmy Prune shook his head, so Michael left and rejoined the line in the rear.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Prune glanced toward the teacher’s desk. Mrs. Friendly was busy helping Loud Larry with a math problem. That’s when Angie cut in line in front of him.

“Hey, no cuts,” Jimmy Prune said. But the girl ignored him.

For the next minute, the class stood in line, waiting to be excused. More students took cuts in front of Jimmy Prune, and more dropped out and rejoined it again in the back. Harper and Jenny went to get a drink of water and somehow ended up behind Jimmy. Freddie waited for when no one was looking and slipped into the line in front of him. *Zip!* The Girl With Bangs, Braids, and Braces took cuts in front of Freddie.

“Come on! Let’s go!” said Jimmy Prune, waving his lunchbox. “Even if there is any chocolate milk left, it won’t be cold anymore.”

At last, Mrs. Friendly looked up from her desk. Loud Larry grabbed his lunch bag and hurried to the end of the line.

“OK, class,” the teacher said. “You may go to lunch.”

As the line shuffled out the classroom door, Jimmy Prune glanced ahead, then behind him.

“Funny,” he said. “After all that cutting, we’re all right back where we started.”