



Twist

Sweeping

Mrs. Friendly faced her class. “It’s time to do our classroom jobs,” she said. “This week, Jimmy Prune, it’s your turn to sweep the sidewalk outside the door.”

Jimmy Prune groaned. He rose from his desk and grabbed the yellow broom in the coat closet.

“Sweeping is the worst class job,” he grumbled.

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

Loud Larry stood in the doorway. “Jimmy Prune, that’s not how to sweep,” he called out. “You’ve got to hold the broom with both hands. Here, let a pro show you how.”

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

Jimmy Prune nodded. “I see, I see. You do that very well.”

Loud Larry swept another row before handing the broom back. “And that’s

how you sweep,” he said, strutting back into the classroom.

Jimmy Prune leaned on the broom handle and groaned again. “Sweeping the sidewalk is torture. Why can’t I feed the class snake or clean the whiteboard? Anything but sweeping.”

He spread his legs wide. He swung the broom forward and backward like a croquet mallet.

The Girl With Bangs, Braids, and Braces stepped out of the classroom. “You’re sweeping all wrong, Jimmy Prune,” she said. “Here, give me the broom. Watch.”

Her braids swung as she swished the broom left and right.

“I see, I see,” said Jimmy Prune. “You’re very good at sweeping.”

The girl smiled and swept some more. “See? Back and forth. That’s the way. Now you do it. I have to get back to watering the plants.”

She handed the broom back to Jimmy Prune and skipped back into the room.

Leaning on the handle, Jimmy sighed. “This job takes forever. Why can’t I straighten the bookshelves? Why can’t I empty the pencil sharpener? I’ll never finish all this sweeping.”

He shoved the broom forward like a wide push broom. He stepped sideways and pushed it forward again.

Mr. Good, the principal, came walking down the sidewalk toward him. He stopped and frowned.

“That’s no way to sweep, Jimmy Prune,” said the principal. “You’ve got to

swing the broom like a hockey stick. Think of how hockey players move the puck down the ice. Let me show you.”

Mr. Good swept a strip of the sidewalk. He stepped forward and swept another. At last, he raised the broom high and whipped it forward as if shooting a slap shot.

“Score! he shouted.

“I see. I see,” said Jimmy Prune. “That’s very helpful.”

The principal swept one more strip and handed the broom back. “Keep up the good work, Jimmy Prune,” he said. “And remember...sweep like a hockey player skating for the goal.”

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.

Veronica, a fifth-grader, stepped out of her classroom. “Jimmy Prune, you’re not sweeping the right way,” she said. She snatched the broom. “Watch how I do it.”

With quick, short strokes, she swept the sidewalk clean.

“Oh, I see,” said Jimmy Prune. “So that’s the right way. You’re a great sweeper.”

By the time she stopped, the sidewalk was spotless.

Jimmy Prune took the broom back to his classroom. As he dropped it in the closet, he muttered, “Sweeping is the worst classroom job ever. And in a few weeks, it’ll be my turn again. By then, I bet I’ll have forgotten how to do it and

have to learn all over again. I hate sweeping.”